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JULIA SEVERA;

OR THE

Year Four Hundred and Ninety-two;

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

J. C. L. SIMONDE DE SISMONDI,

AUTHOR OF NEW PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL ECONOMY; THE HISTORY OF FRANCE, THE ITALIAN REPUBLICS OF THE MIDDLE AGE, THE LITERATURE OF THE SOUTH OF EUROPE, &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CHAP. I.

AN UNSUCCESSFUL SEARCH.

"This spot was so secret and retired, that no hermitage "was ever so solitary; for on one side it was bounded by "the rugged rocks of a lofty mountain; on the other by the "Loire, which rolled its stream round this small plain. "There was only one way of access, and that was narrow "and difficult.——The greater part of the monks had their "cells in excavations hewn in the stone of this mountain."—*Sulpitius Severus—Life of St. Martin, cap.* 7. *v.* 574.

SYLVIA had not spoken a word or moved from the spot; her veil was lowered, and, whether she sought to tranquillize her troubled mind by prayer; or, whether on the contrary, she traced in her imagination all the dreadful conjectures that might explain the strange event to which she was obliged to submit, she seemed to have renounced all communication with exterior objects.

Eudoxus loved Sylvia and Felix sincerely; that is, as much as he possibly could love any

other than himself: he was, therefore, deeply afflicted and much terrified; but his grief for others could not make him lose sight of his own comforts; and although bewailing the danger to which his patron was exposed, he yet felt a certain portion of regret at the idea that Sylvia's determination would compel him to pass the night without supper or bed; for he knew very well that it was his duty to watch near her person. He had, consequently, taken his seat by her side, and while she remained immoveable, wrapt in her veil, and apparently, deaf to all he said, he recited to her, with endless volubility, all the finest passages he could bring to his recollection from Seneca's Treatise de Consolatione and Marcus Aurelius de Magnitudine Animi; but on the approach of evening, when he felt the humid atmosphere around him, his uneasiness on his own account, his dread of the rheumatic pains he should be exposed to, the chill of the night, want of sleep, and the comfortless situation in which he was placed, drove from his mind all classical consolation, and blunted his eloquence. In vain did he endeavour to persuade Sylvia to choose some other place of rest for the night. Not being able to obtain any reply from her, he began to address Diocles, Dumnorix, the boatmen, and the slaves,

explaining to them how much he dreaded the danger to which their mistress must be exposed by thus passing the night in the open air; but Diocles and Dumnorix, themselves buried in sorrowful meditation, replied by monosyllables only, and Sylvia appeared as inaccessible to this last indirect attack, as before she had been to his persuasive efforts.

Seeing, at last, the necessity of making up his mind to pass the night at the gate of the cavern, he arose, sighing deeply, and began to give orders for rendering their watch more supportable. The rock which closed the vault was at least fifteen feet distant from its entrance, so that they were sheltered under a kind of portico. The boat in which they had arrived was abundantly provided with mattresses, cushions, carpets, and saddle-cloths; Eudoxus had them all brought to the cavern, together with the saddles of three horses, which were allowed to graze in full liberty through the forsaken streets of the city. After having wrapt Sylvia, who seemed insensible to his attention, in carpets and mantles, he prepared for himself a sort of bed, in which, laying his head on one of the saddles, and covering his body with the sails of the boat, he not only shielded himself from the cold and the wet, but also hoped to escape being seen, should

the *bagaudæ* make a sudden rush, and surprise them.

There was still one thing wanted to complete their nocturnal establishment; — no one had thought of supper. Luckily there yet remained some provisions in the boat; Eudoxus sent for them; he seated Diocles, Dumnorix, the boatmen and the slaves around a large fire at the entrance of the cavern, and intreated them not to remove thence even for an instant: he encouraged them to eat and drink, in order that they might not be weak and incapable of defence, should they be attacked; and raising his head and arms above the heap of sails, cloaks, and carpets which covered him, he was the first to put his hand in the dish, and, sighing deeply, gave them the example of recruiting their strength.

The night was dark; and of the vast ruins of Hesodunum nothing could be discerned but the lofty towers and battlements, which appeared traced in the horizon. At times was heard the shriek or rather the fluttering breath of the screechowl, on the tower where she had built her nest. Of all the sounds which reached our travellers, this was the only one that belonged to life; but the whistling of the wind, the rustling of the leaves and agitated branches, and the murmuring of the river, struck their ears with

varied force, and sometimes sounded like plaintive voices, which they fancied might proceed from the depth of the caverns. The boatmen were speaking in a low voice, and relating in turn the strange depredations of the *bagaudæ*, the horrid deeds of revenge committed by fugitive slaves, or other adventures still more terrific; in which the spirits of hell, the gods of paganism, those of the Druids, and the saints of the newly-established worship, bore a principal part; but when they heard these noises they suddenly stopt; they listened with anxiety, and endeavoured to trace the origin of the sound which struck their ears; and when they had discovered its cause, they resumed their tales in a lower tone, and with a voice more tremulous. Eudoxus, who could not sleep, listened, shuddering, to these different stories. Lying almost on the ground, with his head grotesquely wrapped in napkins, he crawled to the circle formed by the boatmen around the fire, but, like an affrighted tortoise which draws back its head under its shell at the least noise, he retired with rapidity, and disappeared under the heap of sails and cushions, which concealed him from the eyes of all.

Dumnorix and Diocles, both of whom were accustomed to live constantly in the open air,

the one tending his flocks, and the other in the army, amid more real dangers, were much less susceptible of fears which related to themselves alone; but, on the other hand, they were much more deeply affected by the event which kept them on this spot. The love of Diocles for his master, and of Dumnorix for his mistress, was, in both, the strongest and deepest of their feelings. Their greater experience made them conceive more fully the extent of the danger; and though they did not know whither to direct their conjectures, they could see full well that so extraordinary an event could be referred only to some most horrible cause.

A considerable part of the night had already elapsed, when the boat returned from the camp of the legionaries, bringing about twenty workmen, soldiers or sons of soldiers, with pickaxes, mallets, chisels, and other tools, for opening a mine. Sylvia was reanimated by their approach; she gave up the place she had hitherto occupied, and Diocles immediately set the men to work; she encouraged them by the most pressing entreaties, and the most brilliant promises. But in this narrow passage, it was impossible for more than four workmen to labour at the same time, and the excessive hardness of the stone, of which but small parts could be chipped off at

once, proved that many days must pass ere an entrance could be effected.

The having begun the work was, however, in some degree consolatory: the strokes of the mallet seemed to revive Sylvia's courage; as long as she saw something to be done, the vigour of her mind supported her; she remained no longer immoveable and silent; but with her usual presence of mind, gave orders that the work should be continued without intermission by companies of labourers, who should relieve each other in the night as well as in the day: she expressed her intention of sojourning at Hesodunum with all her attendants until an entrance was effected. Eudoxus, who had been obliged to give up his place, stood wrapt in mantles, one placed over the other, leaning against the entrance to the cavern: he also felt revived by the arrival of the workmen, and in his turn gave advice relative to the establishing in some of the houses in the vicinity a more comfortable shelter for the following day and night.

At the first dawn of day another boat, descending the Loire, touched at the port of Hesodunum, and the first passenger who leapt on shore was the Count Julius Severus. Uneasy at the delay of Sulpitia, whose dresses were not yet finished; alarmed at the intrigues of those

who destined Clotilda for Clovis, and who had succeeded in exciting against him the resentment of the barbarian king, in consequence of his not bringing his daughter sooner to the court; dreading also the interview of Julia with Felix, and observing in a letter he had just received from his daughter certain expressions which raised in his mind the first suspicion of a mutual affection, he had departed in haste from Soissons, for the purpose of fetching her himself, and at midnight he reached Noviliacum. The absence of Julia, that of Felix, whom he had not overtaken on the road, and who, nevertheless, had not yet arrived, began already to increase his anxiety and discontent. He concluded that the two young people had met at Hesodunum, and, even in that case, he could not guess why they were not yet returned, when the arrival of the express, sent by Sylvia for assistance, plunged him into the deepest grief. He could not understand the event related to him; he knew not whether his daughter had fallen into an abyss amid the ruins; whether she had lost her way in the subterraneous labyrinths, or whether she had been carried off by robbers: he could only discern that the danger was extreme, and as soon as the labourers Sylvia had sent for were ready, he departed with them.

The explanation between Severus and Sylvia was brief; both buried in sorrow were sparing of words. But as soon as the Count of Chartres had heard what had happened, he desired he might be shewn all the entrances to the vault. Dumnorix acted as a guide, and they were followed by all the workmen who had just arrived, but who could not be set to work for want of room. The entrance which communicated with a large tower, and another which led to the country, were still closed; but when Dumnorix arrived at the third, which he had discovered beneath Hesodunum, and close to the bank of the Loire, he was surprised at finding it open. At the same time he remarked on the sand of the river, and shewed to the count, several footsteps and deep cuts on the strand, such as would be made by the keel of a boat pushed ashore.

These footsteps caused them to suspect that the ravishers had retired with their prey; but they possibly might indicate that during the night a reinforcement had arrived and joined the first band. Severus, therefore, deemed it prudent to use great precaution ere he entered the vault—indeed such as soldiers would take were they marching on a military expedition. Every one, and particularly the legionaries, felt

the necessity of having a commander whom alone they might obey; every one felt the superior experience, intelligence, and coolness of Diocles: his authority was, therefore, acknowledged by the whole body, which united, amounted to nearly fifty persons. The senator, Eudoxus, and Sylvia promised to obey him; and the veteran was obliged to make use of his power in preventing the latter from rushing instantly into the cavern.

Diocles first stopped with wedges the rock which served as a gate to the vault; he then studied the mechanism by which it could be opened and shut. He recognised the narrow pass by which, on jutting stones, they could ascend to the small excavation which he had before called the guard-room; and he convinced himself that within that room, and provided with a light, he should find no difficulty in opening or closing these dreadful druidical gates, to the pivot of which levers were fastened for the purpose of turning the rock.

After leaving a guard at this first gate, he advanced to the interior of the cavern, stopping as often as he found any side branch, fastening all the doors, and leaving a guard. Advancing to the extremity of each avenue, and opening the gate, the catacombs appeared much less exten-

sive, and much less complicated, than imagination and fear had represented them. The strata of hard rock were separated by others of marl, and in these latter the Celtic miners had formed their excavations. The whole extent was composed of five low and narrow avenues and three large halls. In one of these Diocles observed some trusses of straw, on which men had been lately lying; the remnants of their repast, their fire and torches were still to be seen, but they found no inhabitant. After five hours' labour, the catacombs had been thoroughly examined, all the recesses had been scrutinized, and the entrances opened; so that no doubt remained of Julia, Felix, and their ravishers having departed.

Severus, Sylvia, Eudoxus, Diocles, Dumnorix, and the most intelligent among those who had seconded them, formed, when the search was ended, a sort of council of war, to advise mutually on the result. It appeared certain that the captives had been carried off during the night in the boat whose marks had been seen on the sand. But had the ravishers only crossed the river for the purpose of concealing themselves in the woods which covered the opposite bank? Had they dared to continue their navigation and approach Tours, at the risk of

being observed from both banks, which, in the neighbourhood of that town, were somewhat more frequented. This could only be ascertained by minute examination of all the landing places on both banks of the river. All felt themselves fatigued with their own conjectures, and those of the soldiers, who had assisted them in their researches. Their minds could fix on nothing; they wandered in endless doubt; but though they were now certain that the objects of their affection were much farther removed from them than they at first supposed, yet they felt their sorrow somewhat alleviated by knowing they were not immured in these vaults.

A longer stay at Hesodunum would not have brought them nearer the objects of their research, and Sylvia, with agonizing grief, consented to re-embark, and to return to Noviliacum, reft of her son and youthful friend. Before they quitted the shore, the proper measures were taken to continue actively the search they had commenced. A post of legionaries was left at Hesodunum, for the purpose of surprising the ravishers, in case any of them should return to the cavern. Two companies of the same soldiers, under the orders of Diocles, descended along both sides of the Loire, observing minutely the sand at the bank, and seeking the marks of dis-

embarkation. Messengers were sent in all directions, inquiries were made at all the villages, and rewards offered to any one who would furnish tidings of the captives. Dumnorix also departed in order to call on the shepherds of the neighbourhood; if a party of the *bagaudæ* had advanced to the Loire, he did not fear to assert that these shepherds would have some knowledge thereof; for they must have met them in the woods, and it was they who generally furnished the robbers with provisions. After taking all these precautions, Julius Severus, Sylvia, and Eudoxus embarked for Noviliacum, with a feeling of deep sorrow and bitter anxiety, which could not, however be compared to the agony of despair in which Sylvia had been immersed when she was first informed that all the entrances to the cavern were closed.

The seizure of a landholder, a traveller, a magistrate, sometimes by one of those bands of barbarians who ravaged all parts of the empire, at other times by those rebellious and fugitive peasants, inhabitants of the woods, who were called *bagaudæ*, was at this period an event so frequent, that in spite of the terrible consequences that might ensue, the imagination had accustomed itself thereto; for the sorrow felt at a great catastrophe is proportionate rather to

the astonishment, than to the evil it causes. At the same time that the mind was familiarised with the idea of this misfortune, it was also prepared for the remedies that might be applied. It was known that, generally speaking, these deeds were done with no other view than to obtain a heavy ransom for the captives; it was also known to be the interest of the robbers themselves to shew how the captives might be recovered, and where the money should be placed for their deliverance; so that Severus and Sylvia were not without hopes of receiving some tidings of their children before the end of the day.

The day passed at Noviliacum in seeing the successive return of the messengers who had been despatched in all directions. Each brought with him promises of zeal and vigilance from the persons to whom he had been sent; but they all arrived without having seen or heard anything of the young people; the shepherds had no knowledge of the approach of any *bagaudæ*, the legionaries had not observed any marks of landing on the sand, the inhabitants of the banks of the Loire had seen no boat pass by.

Thus disappointed in all their hopes, nothing remained but sorrow and despondency. Sylvia, worn out by the excess of her anguish, had been carried to her apartment, where an attack of de-

lirious fever rendered it impossible for her to see any one. Julius Severus silently paced the lofty halls of the castle, agitated by grief and fear; Eudoxus expressed alternately his alarm for the danger to which his patron was exposed, and his dread of the rheumatism, to which he had exposed himself by sleeping in the open air. The priest Martin was sullen and silent; sometimes he scowled on Julius Severus, and muttered his prayers that the innocent might not be involved in the chastisements of the wicked.

When the last messenger, despatched by Diocles, whose arrival had been awaited with the greatest anxiety, informed them that all the researches made on the banks of the Loire had been unsuccessful, Julius Severus ordered a guide and some horses to be got ready, and having passed a few sleepless hours on a couch, he departed before break of day to the temple of Pan. The Romans who remained attached to the ancient mythology, were, by a spirit of opposition, become more religious than their ancestors; their philosophers had given a mystic signification, to the gross fables which before disgusted sensible men; eternal truths were now thought to be, as it were, veiled under certain allegories, rendered venerable by their antiquity; several sages, the ornament of the schools of

Athens and Alexandria, who seemed indefatigable in the search of truth, were still not only pagans, but bigots in paganism, for they made it a point of honour to be of that faith. For this reason the Emperor Julian, the benefactor to the family of Severus, and consequently the object of its admiration and gratitude, had been much more fervent in his religious zeal than any of the cotemporaries of Augustus. Julius Severus firmly believed that Lamia possessed, by superhuman means, the power of knowing where Julia was at that moment, and that she was also acquainted with her future destiny; and having some reasons to suspect that she kept up a communication with the wandering *bagaudæ* of the country, and that she received their offerings, he hoped she might be of use as an agent for the ransoming of his daughter.

Julius Severus was not altogether mistaken in his conjectures. Lamia had certainly received the libations and offerings of a numerous party of *bagaudæ*, who, several months before, had found a temporary shelter in the ruins of Hesodunum. These were the same who afterwards committed so many depredations in the neighbourhood of Orleans: many of them, after pining a long time in the prisons of that city, had been slain in the festivals celebrated by Numerianus;

the others, driven from fastness to fastness, had in the end been obliged to flee to the sanctuaries, in order to escape the executioner. They had taken shelter at the tomb of St. Martin, in the hermitage of St. Eusithus, and the cathedral of Bourges; where they gained the confidence of the monks, by their affected zeal for a religion to which they were nearly all strangers. Lamia, who regarded them as the deserters of her own altars, was ready to accuse both them and the priests who gave them an asylum.

Lamia received the Roman senator with an air of dignity which she durst not assume with Felix Florentius. She sympathized with him in his grief and anxiety, and approved his conduct in having begun his inquiries by endeavouring to render the gods propitious to his views. A law promulgated near a century back, condemned to death, as guilty of high treason, all who sacrificed to the gods of antiquity; but this law, though strictly observed in the cities, could hardly be executed in the country where no civil authority was acknowledged: the altar contributed to the subsistence of the priest, and the purchase of victims, which remained to the sacrificer, afforded him who consulted the oracle the means of expressing his gratitude to the ministers of the god. Lamia did not lose this op-

portunity of shedding that blood which for a long time had not flowed on the altars of Pan. While her son was gone with the money of Severus to purchase a white heifer from the neighbouring herdsmen, she requested the count of Chartres to detail all he had himself seen at Hesodunum, all he had learnt from Eudoxus, not only respecting this last accident, but respecting the whole of Julia's residence at Noviliacum; she put questions relative to her former excursions, made minute inquiries concerning her vision in the castle of Rutilianus, to which she appeared to attach the utmost interest and attention; and even wished to know the behaviour of priest Martin, both when Severus first arrived at Noviliacum, and when, after the catastrophe, he returned with Sylvia. The count of Chartres was much surprised at the shrewdness evinced by Lamia in this chain of questions, though she avoided giving any opinion: he was also struck by the stress she seemed to lay on circumstances which he had considered unworthy of attention.

The victim, led by Lamia's son, arrived at the temple of Pan: the sacrifice was performed according to the ancient rites; libations were poured forth, not only in honour of the god to whom the temple was consecrated, but also in honour

of all the gods of Olympus. The horns, the hair, and the entrails of the victim were consumed on the altar; and Lamia, descending into the cavern, the entrance to which she had denied Felix, placed herself on a tripod, which stood over a chasm, whence arose at times a mephitical exhalation. After remaining in this situation a few minutes, she, by a sign, ordered her son to introduce Severus.

When the count of Chartres entered the cave he fancied he could perceive the hoary Pythoness wrestling with the god who now possessed her. Her eyes were animated, and almost infuriate, her white tresses stood erect; she panted as if breathing with difficulty; she wrung her hands and tottered on the tripod, from which she would perhaps have fallen had not her son rushed to her support. When she saw Severus, she exclaimed—" Worthy imitator of " the august Julian, beware of the priests of " the new god! Beware of our pursuers, those " hungry dogs called monks! Thy daughter " is in their hands; she is hidden in one of " their infernal prisons; she is in the power " of him of thine enemies, who hateth and " feareth thee most—beware lest, to conceal " her from thy search, he bury her in the

"tomb!—Enough; I can no more." Her son now lifted her from the tripod, and carried her into the open air; her lips were covered with foam; her eyes were closed, and some time elapsed before she recovered her senses. Being then too much debilitated to attend to others, she ordered her son to place her on the bed, and Severus departed for Noviliacum.

This oracle gave a new direction to the conjectures and suspicions of Julius Severus. It was true that Lamia's hatred for the priests of the new worship might, in spite of herself, somewhat influence her revelations; but still he thought those priests had a greater interest in carrying off his daughter than the *bagaudæ*. These latter sought only to escape; the priests sought to reign. The *bagaudæ* had scarcely a place on which to lay their heads; the monks had, in every part of Gaul, impenetrable holds: they were all bound by one and the same interest, and the intrigues to prevent the marriage of Julia with Clovis, which Severus had discovered at Soissons, might probably be connected with the atrocious deed committed on the borders of the Loire.

On his arrival at Noviliacum, an epistle from the Bishop Volusianus to Sylvia, which was

communicated to him, increased, rather than destroyed his suspicions. It was couched in the following terms:

" *Volusianus, the servant of the servants of God, to the* " *pious matron, Sylvia Numantia,* GREETING.

" We have learnt by your messenger, and " have bewailed with tears of charity and com- " miseration, the grief you feel at the disappear- " ance of your son. We have also seen that " you suspect he has been carried off by some " *bagaudæ*, or other ruffians who were hidden " in the profane ruins of Hesodunum, the idol- " atry of which hath been punished by the Al- " mighty. We have in consequence thereof " given our orders, that should any men of this " description be seen in our holy city of Tours, " they may be arrested and even interrogated " by torture, in order to discover where the " illustrious Felix Florentius is to be found. " May you then open your heart to consolation, " and revive your hopes. Let us meanwhile " exhort you to remember that it is written " *thou shalt not hold communion with the un-* " *godly.* The idolater brings ruin and desola- " tion, not only on himself, but on the house into " which he hath entered. We offer up our " prayers to the Almighty and to the glorious

"Confessor, St. Martin, that your son may not "be comprised in the judgment which heaven "hath pronounced against the favourers of the "abomination of idols. As we shall remember "you and him in our prayers, do you remember "the lights which burn night and day before "the sepulchre of the holy Confessor; for cha-"rity given to the priests of the Lord and the "ministers of his temple, blotteth out a multi-"tude of sins."

CHAP. II.

THE CAPTIVES.

.....LATEBROSA VAGIS RIMATUR HABENIS
DEVIA, FRATERNUM CUPIENS EXIRE SUB ORBEM.
JANUA NULLA PATET. PROHIBEBANT UNDIQUE RUPES
OPPOSITÆ; DURAQUE DEUM COMPAGE TENEBANT.

Claudiani, de Raptu Proserpinæ, lib. ii. *p.* 44.

"He examines these caverns without an issue to find an "approach to the world illumined by the day; but no gate "is open to him: opposing rocks arrest him on all sides, and "offer to him an insurmountable barrier."

The Author's Translation.

WE left the two lovers walking together in the vaults of Hesodunum. Julia was repeating to Felix for the tenth time, with increased liveliness of expression and animation of tone, that the military fame of Clovis inspired her with horror alone; that his power recalled to her memory only the oppression of her country, and that the person of the conqueror, of which so flattering a portrait had been drawn, did not lessen her dislike to him, when, suddenly,

the light which proceeded from the opening of the cavern, and towards which they were both advancing, was no longer visible, and nearly at the same instant the glimmering rays behind them, proceeding from the steps by which they had ascended, also disappeared. Not a beam of light now illumined the cavern, and the two lovers were unable to discover what direction they should take.

Felix at first imagined that the slaves, sporting with each other, and supposing their master to be out of the cave, had closed the gates to terrify or teaze some of their companions. He raised his voice, ordering them to open the passage, making known that he was in the interior; but he received no answer. He shouted still louder, but without success. "Those scoundrels," said he, "cannot hear us, we must open the gate "ourselves, or we shall be obliged to wait until "my mother, perceiving our absence, gives or-"ders to the slaves."

Julia was not subject to idle fears; and never had she felt herself less disposed to be alarmed than now, when supported by the arm of Felix. Both advanced in the dark, feeling their way, but, at the same time, laughing at the odd adventure; they kept close to the sides of the rock, the unevenness of which made them sometimes

deviate from a straight line, and therefore led them to believe they were straying from the right path. At length they arrived at the extremity of the cavern, where they fancied they should find a door, but what was their astonishment when they found their passage barred by a rock! In vain did they feel for some obstacle in wood, which might be moveable; they found on all sides stone, presenting to them an impervious wall.

"Doubtless," said Felix, "instead of walking "directly towards the gates, we must have en- "tered some recess in the rock, or some gallery "with no passage outwards; we must return, "take the wall on the left, proceed in that di- "rection, and we shall soon be guided by a "ray of light."

They returned, feeling their way by the side of the rock, and endeavouring to walk in a direct line. Felix continued, however, to assure Julia there was not the slightest cause for fear; that his mother, on finding they did not make their appearance, would instantly cause the cavern to be opened, and search to be made for them with torches should they have strayed from the direct path. But, in his own mind he felt astonished that she had not already commenced her researches. Although he did not

yet feel any positive fear, he began to be alarmed; he felt for Julia, his expressions became more concise, and his voice more hurried. Julia on her part, spoke but little, and answered by monosyllables only.

Nevertheless they continued advancing, Felix supporting Julia, and keeping his hand constantly on the sides of the wall; but they now proceeded in an opposite direction to the opening of the vault, which they had at first approached. Suddenly Julia felt herself seized by the arm and shaken violently, in order to wrest her from Felix; she uttered a piercing cry; Felix, aroused by the shriek and by the efforts she made to retain her hold of him, sprang to the side he found they were dragging her. His hands met those of another man; he seized him, raised him in his arms, and then threw him on the ground, falling on him at the same time. His adversary was robust, and they were struggling, when another shriek from Julia warned him that other enemies had siezed her person, and were endeavouring to carry her off. "Whoever thou art," said he "to his adversary, holding him by the throat, "thou art a dead man unless thou command "thy comrades to desist and give that lady her "liberty."

"Penitence, my son, penitence, and submis-
"sion to the will of God, or thou shalt perish
"with the ungodly!" said the unknown indi-
vidual, as soon as Felix loosed his grasp.

"Wretched hypocrite," retorted Felix, squeez-
ing his throat with double violence, "thou thy-
"self shalt first perish unless thou instantly obey
"my order."

"Stop, my brethren:" cried the unknown,
and those who held Julia obeyed. "Young
"man," continued he, "thou art rushing to
"thine own destruction. Thy companion is al-
"ready bound in the inextricable chain of sin;
"for her there is no salvation, unless she do pe-
"nance in the house of the Lord. As for thee,
"thou wert to have seen again the joyous light
"of day. But know thou hast met thy ruin by
"striking me, an unworthy priest of the living
"God. Thou hast thus incurred excommunica-
"tion, and," he added, raising his voice with pe-
"culiar emphasis, "it is meet that what is bound
"in heaven should be bound on earth also."

These words indirectly addressed to the com-
panions of the priest, served probably to indi-
cate what they were to do; for he had scarcely
pronounced them, when, two other men, who
had approached at the noise made by Felix,
roughly seized him by the arms, extricated the

priest from under him, and pinioned his hands behind his back. The priest, as soon as he arose, demanded a light; a man then appeared with a torch in his hand, coming from an excavation above the gate, whence he descended by some steps roughly hewn in the rock. The link he brought with him shewed Felix and Julia the strange persons into whose hands they had fallen.

The priest who had been thrown on the ground by Felix appeared to give orders to the others; his physiognomy did not bear those marks of gross stupidity or blind fanaticism, which Felix expected to find in the agent of such a deed. His features were noble, they expressed fervour, accompanied with somewhat of severity, but not untinctured with compassion. He appeared to be about fifty years of age; his beard was flowing, and his shoulders were covered with the habit of the penitents, but the cowl was not drawn over his head. Two men, entirely clothed in the same garb, their faces concealed, held Julia fast; two others had seized Felix by the arms. Besides these and the one who carried the torch, others were seen arriving from the extremities of the cavern. All had their cowls drawn closely over their faces, excepting the first, who, for some moments remained silent, apparently wishing to give his captives

time to resume their presence of mind, to examine his person, and thereby judge into what hands they had fallen, and to convince themselves of the folly of resistance. He then spoke:

"You have had the misfortune, Felix, to "strike a priest, but you knew him not; you "were taken by surprise, you thought only of "defending yourself: I hope this horrid sin "will be forgiven as I forgive you. But re-"collect you are under the ban of excommu-"nication; your first object must be to obtain "absolution. Heaven hath already punished "you by giving you the advantage in this "struggle; better would it be for you had you "been vanquished. Then would you have "avoided the painful contest you are now "called to engage in: the daughter of the "idolater would have been wrested from you "without your being obliged to contract an en-"gagement which I know is repugnant to your "worldly prejudices. This your violence hath "not permitted; the orders I have received, now "leave me no choice: you, as well as herself, "are to be conducted to a religious asylum, "and there remain until you have bound your-"self by a solemn oath never to reveal what is "become of her."

"Woe to him," exclaimed Felix, "that could "pledge so execrable an oath!"

The priest cast on him a look of compassion, but replied not. "You, daughter of Severus," said he, turning to Julia, "you have fallen "into the hands of the ministers of that God "against whom you have rebelled, into the "hands of those ministers whom you were pre-"paring to persecute by once more rearing the "altars of paganism; but, my daughter, lose "not your courage; these ministers are more in-"dulgent than you imagine: they will open "your eyes to the light of truth, they will "call your soul to the joys of eternity. The "time shall come when you will thank me for "having rescued you from the pomp of wicked-"ness, and for hindering you from encircling "your brows with a diadem, presented by en-"sanguined hands."

"I know not," replied Julia, "who can give "you the right either to question my conscience, "or to attempt my liberty; but if I am to be-"lieve your words, you are much mistaken re-"specting me. I am a Christian as well as "yourself."

"You a Christian!" replied the priest in a tone of disbelief, "those like yourself have "never thought themselves bound to confess "error, as our saints confess truth. Too well "have we learnt to know those idolaters in

" heart, who are Christians with their lips only. " I wish, however, to spare you the utterance " of a profane falsehood: it is not to me that " you are to open your conscience. I have no " other duty to fulfil than to stop you on the " brink of the precipice down which you were " about to fall, and to place you in the hands of " a prelate more worthy, more enlightened than " myself. He will take charge of your soul; I " have only to take care that you be conducted " in a decent and becoming manner to the con- " vent which is intended for your reception. I " regret that you should be the only female " among so many men: it was impossible to " arrange otherwise, but I will contrive that " this painful inconvenience may continue no " longer than is absolutely necessary. Follow " me; come and take some food to prepare " yourself for the fatigues of the journey."

Felix and Julia were not at liberty to refuse this invitation. They accompanied their guards to one of the subterraneous halls, where a large fire had been kindled, and a frugal meal spread, consisting of milk, bread, dried fruits, and salt fish. " You must now feel convinced," said the priest to the captives, " that all resistance " on your part would be useless. Will you " then frankly promise to make no attempt to

"escape? If so I will order your hands to be "liberated." Felix and Julia both felt that now they had no choice left. They promised to make no resistance, nor any efforts for their escape until they should be out of the cavern; the priest, therefore, ordered their bonds to be loosed.

In spite of the resentment they felt on account of the culpable violence which deprived them of their liberty, Felix and Julia could not avoid observing by the demeanour of the superior, that with fervent zeal he mingled affectionate compassion, and that he preserved a conscientious feeling of duty even at the very time when he thought himself compelled by his vows of obedience to commit so outrageous an action. Both felt that this man who had taken from them their liberty, and was about to dispose of their persons, as if they were legitimately subject to him, was not, however, their enemy: both perceived they had nothing to fear from him beyond what he had already announced to them; and although they had just been made his prisoners in defiance of all law, they placed their confidence in him. They plainly saw they should be condemned to a certain period of captivity in some convent; but they were convinced that by firmly refusing to pronounce eternal

vows, that captivity must have an end. With the consciousness they had of the rank they held in society, and of the power of their families, they thought it impossible their calamity could be of long duration; and at this time the violence to which they were obliged to submit, would serve better to rescue Julia from the pursuits of Clovis, than any of the expedients they had before dreamt of. They resumed, therefore, a certain degree of composure, and did not refuse to share the repast which had been prepared for them.

"You affirm, father," said Julia to the priest, "that you feel no animosity against us, and I "am willing to believe you. I do not regret "the crown you wish to remove from my head, "and, if the violence you have just committed, "spare me the horror of giving my hand to the "enemy of my country, I shall, perhaps, feel "obliged to you for a deed, the justice of which "I leave to the decision of your own conscience; "but if it be true that you are not excited by "hatred, you will not employ against us any "rigour beyond what is necessary for the at-"tainment of your object. Whither do you "intend to take us?"

"To Tours."

"Into whose hands shall we be delivered?"

"You will be placed with the nuns; Felix "with the monks of St. Martin."

"Will there be no means," said Felix, "of "our seeing each other?"

"Certainly not."

"May we at least," said Julia, "tranquillize "our families on the subject of our disappear- "ance?"

"That is impossible; thereby they would be "enabled to discover you."

"I shudder," said Felix, "at the anguish my "mother feels; even now perhaps is she in vain "seeking for us on all sides. If you conceal "from her what you do with us, shew me at "least some means of calming her agitation."

"I see none."

"A note directed to her might be sent or left——"

"My orders are positive, to permit you to "have communication with no one. The fate "of the church of Gaul depends, perhaps, on "the retreat of the daughter of Severus not "being suspected. Were we to do what you "request, your mother would discover that you "are not in the power of robbers, and probably "might then guess that you are in ours."

"Before that God whom you serve," exclaimed Felix rising, "I make you responsible

" for the life of my kindred: far better would it " be to plunge a dagger into their hearts, than to " make them slowly perish by grief and anxiety."

The priest seemed affected. He carried his hand to his brow as if to wipe away a tear. Then, resuming, with a violent effort, all the severity of his countenance and voice, he replied, " I fulfil my duty; for the consequences " I need not care."

Felix sunk on his seat, dismayed by this mixture of compassion and inflexibility, which left him no hope. " My poor unfortunate mother " will fancy we have perished in these caves!" said he with the voice of despair.

" No," said the priest, " when we depart we " will leave these caverns open, so that she may " be convinced you are no longer here. Be- " sides," added he, with a voice of deep affection, which revived the hopes of Felix, " what I " have not the right to do, will surely be done " by my superior. He cannot wish to be an- " swerable before God for the life of your " mother."

After having thus spoken, the priest arose from the table, walked several times across the subterraneous hall, agitated by the most violent feelings; he then threw himself on his knees, apparently seeking to fortify himself by prayer

for the execution of what he considered to be his duty.

Felix turned towards Julia, and commenced, in a low voice, a conversation which neither the priest, nor any of his assistants, sought to hear or interrupt. Both saw with grief the moment approach when they should be again separated. But at the same time both observed, that the present trial could be only temporary, whereas it perhaps rescued them from endless misery. They consequently endeavoured to strengthen themselves against the dangers to which, when separated, they would probably be exposed, and above all against the false reports respecting each other they might hear from those who surrounded them. They mutually promised never to believe, on the faith of any one, that either of them had renounced the hope of a union by entering into an eternal covenant. They solemnly declared they would never pronounce the vows in the convents where they were going to be immured; that they would never cease to love each other, and never would abandon the hope of being ultimately united. They had been informed that they must give up all hopes of an interview as long as they should be in the power of the monks; but it was not certain they would be denied the privilege

of corresponding, or at least of exchanging symbolical presents or messages to which they already endeavoured to prefix a meaning.

With them time fled more rapidly than with the unhappy Sylvia, and they had been several hours in the cavern when one of their guards, who had departed some time before, came back to the priest, and whispered some words in his ear. "The time is expired," said he to his captives, "let us depart. Felix, it is better both "for you and for me that you should revoke "the promise you have given, and that you "should yield to force alone. You may, per-"haps, imagine as you quit the cave that a "moment of daring skill might suffice to re-"cover your liberty. I do not wish to expose "you to a temptation which would only aggra-"vate your sufferings.—Let the captives be "again bound." When they were properly secured, he said to his attendants, "cover their "mouths with a bandage, and clothe them in "the habit of our order; draw the cowl over "their eyes, and let us begone."

When the habit was presented to Julia, her whole frame shook: it was similar to the one offered to her in the vision which had made so deep an impression on her mind. That prophetic dream now seemed to be accom-

plished; she had taken the garb of penance; she was following men who wore the emblems of St. Martin of Tours; she was quitting the vain pomps of the world. But could she determine whether by so doing she completely fulfilled the order she had received; whether the foolish hopes she was commanded to renounce were not those she had formed of a union with Felix? The confidence that had revived in her heart; the satisfaction with which she had seen an obstacle opposed to the will of her father, more powerful than any she herself could have raised, vanished in an instant. The tears began to trickle down her cheeks, but her mouth was closed with a linen bandage; the cowl was lowered over her face, she could neither be seen nor heard; and though she stood by the side of Felix, all communication between them had ceased. Two men now took her by the arms, and led her onwards in silence; two others conducted Felix in the same manner. A man, bearing a torch, the glimmer of which was discerned through their cowls, preceded them. After walking some time through the cavern, they heard a noise similar to that of a gate turning on its hinges; they passed onwards, and perceived that a fresh gale fanned their garments. They were out of the cavern. Both

simultaneously endeavoured to shriek; but although their voices were not entirely stifled by the bandages which covered their mouths, the guides paid no attention. They raised them by their arms, and placed them in a boat by the side of each other. Soon after the rolling of the current, and the strokes of the oars, convinced them they were descending the Loire.

CHAP. III.

THE DEMONIAC.

"As soon as the authors of these crimes are seized by an "unclean spirit they tear and bite each other with their teeth, "crying with a loud voice: O HOLY MARTYR, WHEREFORE "DOST THOU TORMENT ME THUS?"

Greg. Tur. Hist. Lib. iii. *cap.* 12. *p.* 192.

THEIR voyage lasted several hours; the wind was fresh and the air damp; the two lovers were still bound, they could neither see each other, nor indeed any object around them. The bandage which had been placed on their mouths to hinder them from calling for assistance, when they passed a village, or met a boat, had not been taken away; nevertheless the motion of their heads had somewhat loosened them, but as they took advantage of this circumstance only to converse together, the guards had not thought it necessary to draw them tighter.

Sitting on the same bench, and leaning against

each other, while the rolling of the boat made them often lose their balance, the two lovers commenced a conversation, in a low voice, which was not interrupted; but as they had reason to believe they were observed and perhaps overheard, they spoke with the greatest reserve. They were not mistaken: the priest who conducted them was seated behind them; he listened and was astonished to find by their discourse, that she who had been represented to him as the intended bride of Clovis was attached to another man, and that she dreaded her union with the king of the Franks more than the captivity to which he was taking her; he found that she who had been described to him as having no other thought, no other desire than the re-establishment of idolatrous worship, and the persecution of the church, spoke of the priesthood with respect, and placed herself confidently under the protection of that very religion in the name of which she had been deprived of her liberty.

In their captivity the two lovers still felt some delight as long as they could lean against and hear each other; for the most innocent contact often excites a reciprocal sensation. Seated on a narrow bench, cold, fatigue and the pitching of the boat, as they could not support themselves with their hands, obliged them to press together

the more closely; thus, without offending the most scrupulous prudery, each felt the palpitation of the other's heart, which spoke a language more expressive than could have been uttered by the tongue. Breathing together, supporting each other, companions in adversity; these circumstances had formed for them that indissoluble bond to which they directed all their hopes. Never had they loved more, never had affection made a more rapid progress in their hearts.

They arrived at Tours as the day began to break. No motion was yet heard in the streets. The cumbrous gates of St. Martin were opened to them: they entered, and not till then was the cowl removed which covered their faces: their hands were unbound, and the bandage was taken from their mouths.

Felix and Julia were now standing in a quadrangle, surrounded on three sides by large buildings, but on the fourth bounded by a wall which arose to the height of the most lofty edifices. In front of this wall was seen one side of the cathedral, easily distinguished by its peculiar architecture; on the two other sides stood two square houses opposite each other, the narrow windows, iron gratings, and massy walls of which, proved they were convents. Of these,

one was the nunnery of St. Mary of the Casket; the same which Ingletrude, daughter of Clothaire the first, rebuilt and richly endowed a century afterwards; the other containing monks differing in order, habit and discipline, who relieved each other in chanting psalms incessantly in the cathedral, was the famous monastery of St. Martin of Tours, the most celebrated, the most rigid in its rules, and the most wealthy of Gaul.

When Felix and Julia recovered the use of their sight, they measured with their eyes those lofty walls, black with humidity; those narrow windows, by which so small a portion of light was admitted into the cells of the unfortunate recluses, those gratings, those bars, which seemed like precautions taken against the repentance of such as had voluntarily condemned themselves to eternal imprisonment, and against their efforts to escape: the solemn, the death-like stillness, in a place where so many living beings were immured; the turf, the moss which covered the pavement of the quadrangle, shewing how rarely it was trodden; all these objects made a deep and sorrowful impression on the hearts of Julia and Felix. They turned their eyes towards each other, seeking a confirmation of the promises of constancy and love they had pledged

the preceding night; but Felix saw the tears glisten in the eyes of Julia, and he felt that strength of resolution might remain powerless before the force of monastic despotism to which they were now both subjected.

The priest who conducted them hither, after allowing them some time to recover themselves, said: "my children, I have fulfilled, towards "you, a severe duty; perhaps I have caused "you to suffer much, although labouring for "your eternal happiness, not less than for the "welfare of the church: I repent not. Belongs "it to me, weak reptile that I am, to weigh the "commands of the Most High? Belongs it to "my arrogant reason to scrutinize what divine "wisdom hath determined, or what its organs "on this earth have pronounced? But yet the "old man is not entirely subdued in me. I can "feel regret, though I have no remorse: I should "have been better pleased had the holy arch-"bishop spared me the painful task I have just "completed. As I have injured you by my obe-"dience, I should wish, if possible, to benefit "you by my affection. If any opportunity "present itself for me to serve you, remember "Father Andrew. If you preserve any resent-"ment against me, offer it as a sacrifice to the "Almighty, not for the love of me, but for the

"love of yourselves. Be assured I have not "forgotten your intreaty to ease Sylvia Numan- "tia of her present anguish. If there be any "means of so doing, without betraying the "secret confided to my trust, I will undertake "it."

The two captives looked on each other; this was, perhaps, the last time their eyes would ever meet: their hearts were too full of tenderness and grief to leave any room for resentment and hatred: both assured Father Andrew they forgave him, and would, in case of need, profit by his good intentions towards them.

Father Andrew hesitated; something still pressed on his mind, yet he seemed unwilling to express it. At length he said: "you are going "to live among holy men and holy virgins; you "will see in them, doubtless, nothing but exam- "ples of virtue, sanctitude, and obedience; imi- "tate those examples, and above all imitate "their silence. The time will come, perhaps, "when by a general confession, you shall vo- "luntarily open your hearts to some holy man, "but until then be silent, since all you utter "will be reported to the archbishop: let him "hear what you have to say, from your own "mouth rather than from the report of your "confidants; for in a convent, as in the world,

"it is more safe to confess than to confide." Father Andrew having given this last warning to his captives, knocked at the doors of the two monasteries.—"A male and a female penitent," said he to the porter, "by the order of the most "holy bishop Volusianus." The two lovers pressed each other's hand, pronouncing a farewell; they entered the convents, and heard the heavy gates closed and barred behind them.

The porter who had introduced Felix into the monastery, conducted him, without speaking, to a long hall, which appeared to be the refectory of the monks, and there left him alone. Felix seeing him retire, recalled him, wishing to ask a few questions; but the porter informed him he must await the orders of the abbot, and did not vouchsafe to give any further answer.

After he had remained in this place two hours, a procession of about twenty monks entered, walking two by two: their eyes were cast on the ground, their hands folded on their breasts, and they were repeating a prayer. Felix approached several of them successively, asking what they expected him to do. Each repelled him, with a gesture of impatience, expressing that he did not wish to be interrupted. When the prayer was ended, the monk who walked at the head of the others, and who was called the

dean, deigned to notice his presence. "Are "you Felix Florentius?" said he.

"The same."

"Sit down."

At the same moment all the monks took their places at the table, saving one, who, ascending a sort of pulpit, began the reading of the gospel. The pantry now opened, and numerous lay brethren entered with solemn gravity, bearing dishes in their hands. Soon the table was covered with well-dressed viands. But each monk, and Felix himself, had a separate commons, a separate piece of bread and a portion of wine. It appeared that it was intended no monk should ever find it necessary to ask of his neighbour any of those slight services which are mutually rendered at table, and that he never should risk the loss of his proper share by the gluttony of his brethren. The commons were so abundant that they appeared more than sufficient to satisfy the most voracious appetite; but Felix saw them rapidly disappear from the plates of the monks, although he had scarcely touched his own.

The reading continued, to which the monks, busied with their repast, paid little attention; their eyes were fixed on their plates alone; no look of affection, of intelligence, of civility,

was exchanged between them. Condemned to pass their lives together, they were as much strangers to each other as if they had never met. Their minds were as insensible to curiosity as to friendship. When their leader, or dean, mentioned the name of Felix Florentius aloud, all eyes were mechanically directed towards him, but it was for an instant only, for afterwards the stranger remained totally unnoticed. His appearance in the middle of the chapter had not drawn forth a single question, he had not even seen in the whole assembly any two monks exchange whispers while looking on him.

Felix imagined that by alluding to his strange adventures he might awaken their torpid curiosity, and commence a conversation with some of his hosts: "When last night I was carried "off," said he, "from the caverns of Hesodu-"num,"——

"Hush!" replied the monk, pointing to the reader, to whom until then he had apparently paid no attention.

Felix thought he had at least left an impression which would act upon the curiosity of his neighbour, and that when the reading should be finished, the monk would himself recommence the conversation. But, after the repast, the reader stopt to eat in his turn, and the monk,

folding his hands upon his breast, and twirling his thumbs around each other, remained in silence, without so much as turning his head towards Felix. This latter, after observing him for some time, looked at the others, and found them all in the same attitude of repose. He now impatiently raised his voice; and addressing the dean himself, he demanded what they intended to do with him.

"Hush!" replied the dean, pointing to the monks, "disturb not their holy meditations." Felix was silent: these meditations continued half an hour, and Felix seeing the closed eyelids, and hearing the loud breathing of his neighbours, and of the dean himself, thought he might with propriety conclude, that what in a convent was termed holy meditation, would, in the language of the world, be called sound sleep.

At length a bell tolled: the monks shook themselves, and with a drowsy voice began to chant an anthem as they arose from their seats, and they quitted the refectory in the same order they had entered it. The dean then turning towards Felix, said, "follow us to the choir." Felix followed. As he advanced he found himself placed between two files of monks, who were chanting with a loud voice. They advanced through several long interior passages,

serving as a communication between the convent and the cathedral, which they entered at the back of the high altar. Another choir of monks had been singing in the church for the last three hours. These did not wear the same habit, and were not subject to the same rules, though they lived in the same convent. They quitted the benches on which they were seated to make room for those newly arrived, and, without interrupting their psalmody, marched out in procession.

Felix now stood in the same church where a few weeks before he had seen Volusianus, and when he had an interview with that prelate in which he seemed to enjoy his entire confidence. He was then charged by the bishop with an honourable mission in the name of all the cities of Gaul: that negotiation he had ended successfully; hardly had he returned; he had not even been able to give an account of his success to those by whom he had been commissioned; and now he stood as a captive, a penitent, or a monk—in short, he knew not what—in the chancel of the cathedral, which he had every reason to believe he should not be allowed to quit.

On the very spot where he had entered, he felt that, although in the presence of the public, he was a prisoner. He was on the second bench,

leaning against the wall. To the right and left, and on the bench before him, were seated several monks, who surrounded him, nearly concealing his person from the sight of the faithful. These latter, moreover, being separated from the choir by a lofty balustrade, stood at some distance. Felix, however, meditated the design of demanding justice of Volusianus with a loud voice, should that prelate approach; and if a fit opportunity should not present itself, he had almost resolved to choose the moment when the church should be full, in order to make known his name, to complain of unmerited violence, and to demand his liberty.

He saw that this would be a desperate attempt, which he ought not hastily to hazard, when he heard the dean say to the bedels, the ushers, and the monks: "the most holy apos-"tolic orders that if the penitent disturb our "sacred duties, or make any effort to escape, "he shall be instantly shut up in the dungeon "beneath the belfry." To this order they replied by a bow of obedience.

In spite of this threat, which they took care to sound distinctly in his ears, Felix thought that if he could defend himself for a few minutes against the monks, the tumult excited in the church would procure him some defenders: but

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then his retreat, and that of Julia, would be known, and even the power of Volusianus would, probably, not be sufficient to retain the latter, if Clovis should demand her. He therefore judged it more prudent to submit himself patiently to a captivity which he supposed could not be of long continuance.

It must also be observed that no opportunity presented itself for him to make an attempt to regain his liberty. Neither Volusianus, nor any of the superior clergy, whom Felix had, in his last journey, seen in his suite, entered the cathedral. At this hour also, the inhabitants of Tours, having commenced their daily labours, were seldom seen in the church. He perceived none but a few old women in prayer at the feet of the different altars; or, in the distance, pilgrims, crawling on their knees around the shrine of St. Martin, and, from time to time, the ferocious countenances of assassins and ruffians, who had taken refuge in the temple. These eyed with greediness and envy the riches displayed before their eyes; but they durst not approach them, convinced that sacrilege was ever punished by instant death.

The chant of the monks had continued without cessation, and its soporific monotony added to the inclination Felix before felt for slumber;

for, since his departure from Soissons, he had taken no repose, as he arrived on horseback to the banks of the Loire; neither had he felt much desire for sleeping while in the presence of Julia, among the ruins of Hesodunum, or in the boat, where he had been led captive with her. In despite of his disquietude, of his strange reminiscences, and the no less strange fears which busied his imagination, his heavy eyes had closed more than once since his entrance into the church: but the bedels were constantly on the watch, and whenever they saw him dozing, they pushed him with their long wands, and this painful struggle continued as long as the chant of the monks—about three hours. It seemed as if he had neither slept nor waked, but had been in a long dream.

At length he heard afar off the approach of another choir of monks, who advanced chanting in the same order, to replace those among whom Felix was sitting. He remarked between the two files, a penitent clothed with a habit similar to that which had been thrown over his shoulders at Hesodunum, and which he had not yet been allowed to lay aside. This penitent was not a monk; he shared not in the chant, but seemed to approach with reluctance and resist the monks who were dragging him forward.

Suddenly he raised his voice: "Help, citizens "of Tours," he exclaimed, "rescue me from "atrocious violence; I am——" His voice was instantly drowned in that of the monks, who began to chant, or rather to bawl out their psalms, with the whole strength of their lungs, at the same time pommeling the body of the wretched struggler. Loud music, forming a part of the orchestra, stifled the shrieks of the miserable penitent, while some devout old ladies, who were on their knees in the cathedral, cried out, A DEMONIAC! A DEMONIAC! casting their eyes on the ground, and praying with increased fervour and enthusiasm.

Although the voice of the pretended demoniac was totally unknown to Felix, he started up, wishing to render him some assistance, but the monks, on both sides, seized him by his arms and compelled him to resume his seat. The demoniac also submitted to superior strength; the new choir took the place of the former, which now quitted the church singing in the same manner as they had entered it; Felix, walking between them, found himself once more in the passages of the convent.

Here the procession separated, and each monk entered a separate cell, the dean, pointing to an open door, said to Felix: "That

" is your cell; be ready at noon for the devo-
" tional exercises."

" What exercises?" said Felix, with astonishment; " what else do you require of me?"

" That you sing in the choir, or at least be
" present at the chant, every morning from
" eight to eleven; in the evening from four to
" seven, and, in the night, only from twelve to
" two; it is moreover expected you should join
" in our prayers at noon, and at eight in the
" evening."

" What can be your object in thus torment-
" ing me? I am no monk, neither do I ever in-
" tend to become one. By what right—"

" Such is the rule of the house; all the un-
" fortunate persons in your state are equally
" subject to it."

" In my state, said you? What is my state?"

" Perhaps were I to tell you what it is, I should
" cause the unclean spirit to return. Commend
" your soul to God and submit."

" No, speak, I ask again, what is my state?"

" Since you must know it—you are a DE-
" MONIAC."

" Strange infatuation; I! I Felix Florentius,
" a DEMONIAC! I, whom your own bishop com-
" missioned to represent him at the court of
" Clovis,—I, who am just returned from an

" embassy, where I have guaranteed the rights
" of your own church!"

" Yes—you—Felix Florentius, who last night
" struck a priest with your sacrilegious hands,
" and by that deed of abomination, abandoned
" yourself to the powers of hell.—You, Felix
" Florentius, who descended into the caverns of
" Hesodunum, to worship the unclean spirits;
" you, who there met an agent of Beelzebub,
" presented to your eyes under the semblance
" of a woman; you, who were so completely
" enslaved by her seductions, as to sacrifice
" your immortal soul to her; you, who were then
" instantly seized by infernal spirits, plunged
" into the darkness of night, and after hav-
" ing been the dupe of I know not how many
" illusions, were whirled rapidly towards the
" gulfs of hell, when a holy man of this con-
" vent, praying before the shrine of the ever
" blessed St. Martin, discovered your danger
" and miraculously delivered you by his prayers,
" a reward, perhaps, for the service you had just
" rendered to our church. The devils were
" this morning compelled to lay you down at
" the gates of our convent. You see, Felix Flo-
" rentius, that I am well acquainted with your
" history."

" What, is this the manner in which they
" dare relate so scandalous a deed?"

"*Dare*, indeed! Know that in our eyes your "past greatness is like the grass that withereth, "like the dust that the wind scattereth. Here "you are no more than a man; and so long as "the unclean spirit hath dominion over you, you "are less than a man. Here we *dare* to speak "the truth; and in case of need we shall *dare* "to place you under discipline. More than "once have we used force to compel the demo-"niacs to assist at divine service; but at the "end of a few weeks the unclean spirit always "yields to our efforts, the paroxysms become "less frequent; the intervals of repose, such as "that in which you now are, become gradually "longer, and he whom at first we were obliged "to bind for the purpose of dragging to the "church, goes thither in the end with good will "and even with pleasure.

"Can it be, that a sensible man does not even "doubt such marvellous assumptions! You nar-"rate them without evincing the slightest asto-"nishment."

"A servant of St. Martin soon ceases to be "astonished: in this house all is a prodigy. "Here we are more accustomed to the order of "miracles than to the order of nature. When "we every day see the sick restored to health, "the dead raised from the grave: when we see

" the sacrilegious struck at the foot of the altar,
" and instantly die, as if crushed by the thunder;
" or, foaming, welter in their blood, for having
" stretched out a profane hand against the sa-
" cred treasures of St. Martin;—when, I say,
" we have seen all this, we cannot feel much
" astonishment at adventures so common as
" yours."

" These common adventures, then, are they
" known to the whole convent?"

" Certainly: and yet you may have perceived
" they excited neither astonishment nor curio-
" sity among our brethren."

Felix, during this conversation had time to calm the irritation of his mind; he was convinced that all resistance would be useless, that his protestations would not be heard, and that any impatience he might evince, would be regarded as a new proof of his being possessed by a devil. He also deemed it prudent to study the plans of those into whose hands he had fallen, and to give them sufficient time to enable him to discover their intentions, in order that he might place himself on the defensive. The dean, although he exercised an absolute authority over him, was not, he thought, a principal actor in this business: he fancied he was not admitted into the confidence of Volusianus, nay,

that he himself believed all the fables he had just related. Felix did not observe in his countenance the marks of any malevolent passion; he thought, that with a little skill and attention he might gain his goodwill. He therefore put an end to the conversation, and entered the cell prepared for him; as he threw himself on the bed to take some repose, he heard his door closed and double locked.

CHAP. IV.

A PROTECTOR.

" If thou givest me victory over these enemies," exclaimed Clovis ; " if I receive any proof of the power which the peo- " ple attribute to thee, I will believe in thee, and will be " baptized in thy name. For I have already invoked my " own gods, and I find they have deserted me."—*Vita S. Rem. p.* 375.

SOME days had already elapsed since the disappearance of Felix and Julia; this time Severus passed, partly at Noviliacum, partly at Chartres, anxiously busied in seeking to gain some tidings of his daughter. He sent messengers on all sides; by the agency of Lamia, the priestess of Pan, he offered to the *bagaudæ*, who might be privy to the deed, pardon, asylum, and reward, in return for a frank confession: he wrote to all his friends: he demanded the assistance of all whose credit or power was considerable; he obtained from them promises but no new intelligence.

Sylvia meanwhile was no less active in her researches. The violent attack of fever, which at first seemed to threaten her with a long illness, had not returned. "I have no time to be "ill," said she, "so long as the liberty, nay, per-"haps, the life of my only son, depends on my "efforts." Thus, in spite of the shock she had just received, the strength of her resolution triumphed over the despondency of her spirits.

Twice she fancied she held a clue which might guide her to truth. Some wandering mendicants from Limoges, declared they had met on that road a party of Visigoth soldiers, conducting two prisoners of importance to Toulouse. They added that one of the prisoners was accused of having entered into a treaty with the Franks, prejudicial to the interests of Alaric the Second. This report did not appear very improbable, and, by giving a new direction to the uneasiness of Sylvia, it served to augment her alarm. She requested to see the beggars, to whom she put many questions, accompanied by presents; she offered them a large reward if they would assist her in recovering her son; but their answers now became more confused, and she was soon convinced their whole tale was a fabrication: she could not so easily determine, whether these vagabonds had themselves speculated upon her

anxiety, or whether a more powerful and skilful hand had directed them.

Just as she had discovered the falsehood of this report, news was brought her of a body of Frank soldiers having advanced to Chartres, who, without making known their motive, had suddenly retired, two days after the disappearance of Felix and Julia. The priest Martin, to whom this information was first given, added that Clovis evidently wished to judge, by his own observation, of the wife offered to him, and had therefore caused her to be carried off, seeing that her father so long delayed bringing her to Soissons. He likewise observed that this conjecture was rendered still more probable by the appearance of a troop of *bagaudæ* in the woods of Chartres; these robbers, who were doubtless guilty of the deed, had been seen the day following that on which it was executed, and likewise on the day before the departure of the Frank troops.

Sylvia immediately transmitted this information to Julius Severus, who was then at Chartres, and therefore better enabled to ascertain its truth. Martin did not await the return of the senator to Noviliacum; since the disappearance of Felix he had become cross and sullen; he declared more openly his detestation

of the count of Chartres and his daughter, whose fatal friendship had, he said, been the cause of his pupil's ruin. He accused every one, he blamed every one, and with an acrimony greater even than he was wont to adopt. At length he departed for Tours, alleging a pressing order he had received from his bishop, Volusianus.

Julius Severus, when returned to Noviliacum, informed Sylvia that the Franks who had been seen at Chartres, formed part of his own suite: that the runaway peasants who had been observed in the woods, came from the north, not from the south. "These false reports," said he, "by which some persons seek to deceive us, take "all doubt from my mind. Our children are "not in the power of common robbers, they "would not be so dexterous. They are not in "the hands of a barbarian prince, nor of any "enemy sufficiently potent to dare our resent-"ment, for he would not take so much trouble. "It can be only some one of the heads of the "church, who thus joins cunning to force; and "if my conjectures have any foundation, if I can "trust the information I have gathered, we must "seek for them at Tours, close to Volusianus. "It would perhaps be better they were in the "haunts of robbers. They are not now, I hope, "maltreated, but I tremble for them as soon as

" our efforts shall excite the alarm of the prelate.
" No crime will Volusianus scruple to commit
" in order to conceal them from our researches.
" Let us beware then, not to knock at the gates
" of the convent in which they are immured
" until we are certain they must be opened to us."

Sylvia would have been pleased could she have known, in a more precise manner, the nature of the information to which Severus alluded; but as it was connected with his communications with Lamia, and as he himself could not clearly distinguish what in her revelations he ought to attribute to the prophetic powers of the Pythoness, or to the secret information of the confidant of the *bagaudæ*, he did not tell Sylvia all he knew, and therefore could not succeed in bringing her to consider the captivity of their children in the same point of view. During their conversation a messenger delivered to Sylvia an unsealed note, which she immediately knew to be written by her son: it contained the following words only:—

" I am in health and in safety, but a captive
" and separated from Julia. My greatest grief
" proceeds from the anguish into which you must
" have been plunged by our disappearance.
" Those in whose power I now am, allow me
" to calm your anxiety, under condition that I

" give you no information respecting the place
" to which we have been taken, and also that I
" do request you will make no search for us, as
" all your efforts would serve only to aggravate
" our confinement."

The bearer of this note declared he had received it from a priest he did not know, who had come to seek him in a neighbouring village. No other information could be elicited from this man. The note, however, and the profession of him who had transmitted it, confirmed the suspicions of Julius Severus. It restored some calm to the mind of Sylvia, and induced her to acquiesce in the measures Severus was about to adopt.

The archbishop, or, as he was more commonly called, the metropolitan bishop of Tours, acknowledged no superior on the earth. There was no government to which the aggrieved might appeal against his arbitrary measures. The Visigoths of Toulouse had certainly, during a short space of time, extended their jurisdiction to the banks of the Loire; but during the six years that had passed since the death of Euric, no Visigoths had ever been seen to advance into this part of Aquitaine: the rights to which Alaric might have pretended were now entirely forgotten; and even had he preserved them, they

would probably never have been exercised, for the Arian was very cautious in meddling with the affairs of the church, or resisting popular superstition.

Those who invoked the assistance of a council, or of the bishop of Rome, were obliged to resign themselves to the certainty of awaiting for years that justice which in the end was probably refused: to obtain justice by individual strength was impossible. The Romans who inhabited the provinces, having no soldiers to defend even their own property, were not inclined to take up arms in a private quarrel, least of all against the church. To penetrate into a convent by some stratagem or by surprise, in order to rescue the victims of sacerdotal power, was so difficult an enterprise, that scarcely was there an example of its being accompanied with success. Severus, however, meditated the attempt, should all other means fail.

But before recurring to these desperate measures, Severus resolved to apply to Clovis, in order to obtain by his means the liberty of Felix and his daughter. He knew very well that it was to throw an obstacle in the way of the marriage of Julia with the king of the Franks, that his daughter had been carried off; but he was aware also that the prelate, who founded all

his hopes of the triumph of orthodoxy upon the conversion of Clovis, would, above all, dread offending him whose protection was of so much importance. Severus was certain Volusianus would shew more deference to the king of the Franks than to any other person.

Severus resolved, therefore, to depart for Soissons; to lay before Clovis an account of the violence of which his daughter was the victim; to point out to him that this attempt of the priesthood was directed against his own royal dignity. He hoped that when he had excited the resentment of the king, he might persuade him to demand peremptorily, that the convents of Tours should be examined by royal agents, in order to ascertain whether Julia and Felix were not detained in them, and in case they were to restore them to liberty.

On his arrival at Soissons, Severus perceived that during his short absence his credit had sensibly diminished. He had quitted head quarters at one of those critical moments among courtiers, when he who wishes to secure his interest finds it necessary vigilantly to watch the sovereign, vacillating between different factions. Never had the influence of Severus over the king of the Franks been greater than in the few weeks immediately preceding his departure;

for he was then managing for him a most important negotiation, that which, uniting the Franks with the Armoricans, had made one single people of the two nations, a people hereafter destined to subjugate the whole of Gaul. But as soon as the treaty was signed, Clovis felt against Severus that jealousy so natural among princes towards those who have contributed to their elevation. His departure from Soissons had freed him from a constraint that was become rather irksome. The enemies of the count of Chartres surrounding the king, profited by the absence of the senator to convince Clovis how trifling was the number of pagans still inhabiting Gaul; how little their influence over public affairs could be dreaded, when once peasants and slaves ceased to be of importance; and Clovis joyfully concluded that he might oppress, without fear, those whom he had until now been obliged to respect.

On the other side, the negotiation which the archbishop of Vienne had undertaken, in order to bring about a union between the king of the Franks and Clotilda, the niece of the king of the Burgundians, was advancing rapidly and prosperously. The Frank warriors had loudly proclaimed their disapprobation of the marriage of

a descendant from the illustrious blood of Meroveus, with any of those Roman women whom they already regarded as their slaves; but they had applauded his union with the royal race of the Burgundians. The king Gondebaud, who had murdered the father of Clotilda; who had cast her mother into a river, with a stone tied to her neck; who had assassinated with the dagger her two brothers; this Gondebaud, forgetting his past violence, no longer thought of the resentment his niece must feel, but he fancied that by her means he might contract a more strict alliance with the king of the Franks: he received with joy the first advances, and shewed himself anxious to promote a marriage which hastened the downfal of his family and monarchy. Clovis, aware of this favourable disposition, had just despatched Aurelianus, his Latin secretary, to Gondebaud, in order formally to demand the hand of Clotilda, so that Julia Severa was now forgotten.

"How dare you stand before me," said Clovis to the senator, "after wishing to deceive me "with respect to your daughter? Did you not "tell me that she was free? I now hear she "could never have been mine, for she was al-"ready betrothed to him who has taken her off."

"He who deceives the king," replied Se-

verus, "surely deserves condign punishment; "but it is not I who deceive your excellency; "it is my enemies who tell you that my daugh- "ter was not free, or that she has been carried "off by Felix."

"It was not of Felix the archbishop of "Rheims spoke: that venerable priest is not "wont to lie. He says that your daughter dis- "appeared in the entrails of the earth—is not "that true?"

"She certainly disappeared in the caverns of "Hesodunum."

"He says she had plighted her faith to a "god.——Who is that god of the Christians "unto whom they rear no altars, but whom "they hate,—whom they fear, and hate as we "do the dread Waldkyres?"

"It is the king of the demons, Lucifer, whom "your excellency means," said a priest who was present; "but far from us be the abomination "of giving to him the name of God."

"Well, that Lucifer whom they don't call a "god, although he reigns, say they, over all hell "and half the earth — Did not he carry off "your daughter? Did she not plight her faith "to him? Did he not come into those ruins of "Hesodunum, you were speaking of, to sum- "mon her to keep her promise?"

"Let not your excellency," replied Severus, "place so much confidence in the priests who "are inimical to your religion. The work of "darkness they speak of was committed by "themselves."

"Say rather wo to the king who respects not "the priests of all religions. It is by them that "our power is strengthened," replied Clovis.

"By them our liberty is annihilated," exclaimed the Frank Theodoric. "Say, Gaul, "who is the priest that hath offended thy "daughter? I will avenge thee."

"And thou," exclaimed the irritated Clovis, "who pretendest to support a quarrel in which "thy sovereign will not engage—who art thou?"

"A Frank—an Antrusthion," (this was the name given by the Franks to their captains, or to the leaders of small parties of volunteer soldiers.) "Never did I or mine yet await the "order of a king to raise or to lay down the "battleaxe."

"You have elected me," said Clovis more calmly, "to lead you on to battle; why then "now wish to march without me?"

"You may," replied Theodoric, "turn your "back on a friend who needs your assistance; "I never abandon mine in necessity."

"Theodoric is in the right," instantly ex-

claimed several Franks; "who shall deny to "men that are free the privilege of unsheathing "their swords for whom and when they choose?"

"My noble Franks," exclaimed Clovis, "far "from me be the thought of usurping your li-"berties; but you have just received the oath "of allegiance from the Roman cities which have "promised tribute to you. Break not that oath, "re-commence not war with them, for the coun-"cil of our nation would not forgive you."

"This is a private quarrel," retorted one of the Franks, "and when a Frank is offended in "his own person or in that of his friend, who "can do him justice if it be not his sword?"

"Let the sword then do him justice," replied Clovis; "but will you draw it against invisible "powers? Have we not seen our soldiers "smitten with terror in the forests of Tongria, "by the breath of the mountain spirit? Did "not the bolt of Hermansul fall on the Frisii "and crush thousands just as they had gained "the victory? Did not the plague blast the "first-born of the Germans because they had "offended the gods of the Gepidi. 'Tis said "the god of the Christians is more powerful "than all these, more dreadful in battle: re-"spect him, then, if you wish to escape his "wrath."

"The gods I respect," replied Theodoric, "but not men: the priests are no more than "men, ambitious to boot—crafty and rapacious. "Gaul, I repeat it, dost thou wish that with "my bold comrades I should go and teach thy "priests to speak the truth? This peace is irk-"some to me, I shall be glad to be better ac-"quainted with the lands on the left of the "Seine."

"Even to the left of the Loire must I lead "you," replied Severus; "but before I accept "your generous assistance, I must crave the "sanction of the illustrious Clovis. He, no "less than myself, has reason to resent the at-"tempt of the archbishop of Tours. My "daughter was carried off that she might not "become his spouse. Let your excellency be-"ware lest you fall into the same dependence "upon priestcraft as have the Roman emperors. "Let your excellency punish the first attempt "to deceive you by illusions, or to impose a "yoke on you, which afterwards you will be un-"able to shake off."

"Roman," replied Clovis, "strive not to "confound thy interest or thy defence with "mine. Whoever he may be that hath taken "away thy daughter, whether Lucifer or Volu-"sianus, she is no longer made for me. Do

"not fancy that I shall go and demand a wife "from the hands of her ravisher; that I shall "wage war against the god of the Christians; "that I shall offend his priests, because one "Roman woman has obeyed the powers, either "of heaven or of hell; or, haply, because she "has fallen into some abyss among the ruins. "From me thou must expect no assistance. "But the Franks are free: if Theodoric will "second thee, he will doubtless find *leuds* "enough to shoulder the battleaxe and follow "him: but let them bear in mind that if the god "of the Christians scatter them with his breath, "Clovis has warned them not to attack him."

This consent wrested from Clovis, in spite of his reluctance, was far from satisfying Julius Severus; he saw that the king did not wish the Franks should enlist under any other banner than his own; he knew that although he was compelled to shew respect to his soldiers, and to yield, continually, to their caprices, yet that deep resentment rankled in his heart, and that he always found means, sooner or later, to punish with cruel severity the offence he had borne in silence. Had Severus wished only to recover a part of his property he would probably have been too much of a courtier to accept the offer of Theodoric; he would have submitted to a

considerable loss, and awaited from the king's favour, a compensation, which perhaps he would never have received; but his only daughter was a prisoner in the hands of his most deadly foes. All other means of restoring her to liberty were denied him. His adherents at Soissons had already warned him of the progress made in the negotiation of the marriage of the king with Clotilda; they also informed him of the credit which St. Remy, had gained, together with the whole ecclesiastical party. The reception he had met with from Clovis convinced him that he could expect nothing from his friendship, and that the services he had rendered him, far from exciting his gratitude, were in his eyes become a demerit. He, therefore, accepted the offers of Theodoric, and demanded a conference with him in order to settle the plan of the meditated expedition.

Julius Severus did not desire, any more than Clovis, to renew hostilities between the Franks and the Romans. He wished to arrive before Tours with a body of some strength, so that the prelate might experience a little fear, and not reject his first demand; but he also wished that the Franks might afterwards retire, without having an opportunity to unsheath their swords. Such was the weakness of the provinces of Gaul,

such the defenceless state of Tours, where his enemy commanded, that he thought a body of three hundred Frank warriors more than enough to hazard a march of sixty leagues beyond head quarters, and dictate laws to a large city.

He did not wish to be compelled to satisfy the avidity of a greater number of soldiers than was absolutely necessary; for he had resolved to conduct them across the land of the Carnuti, and over his own estates; and he was perfectly aware that these barbarian soldiers would be very unpleasant guests, even though they advanced as friends. He designed, with the aid of Sylvia Numantia, to lead them across the Loire at Noviliacum, and thus deceive the foresight of Volusianus, who probably thought himself safe while protected by so wide a river.

The generous assistance of Theodoric was not gratuitous; the Franks loved battle, but the booty of war pleased them as much as its dangers. Theodoric demanded that his soldiers should be kept and paid during the whole of this expedition, at the end of which Severus was to give them two besants of gold per man, amounting to about one pound sterling; captain and men reckoned still more on the present the monks of St. Martin would not fail to make to the warriors about to honour them with a visit.

All these preliminaries being settled, Theodoric invited his comrades to a grand feast in the palace of Count Julius Severus, at Soissons.

Roman elegance presided not at this festival; its only excellency consisted in the abundance, not in the variety or delicacy of the viands. Fifteen tables were spread in the different halls: on each was seen an ox, a boar, a deer, or some other wild or domestic animal, roasted whole, and prepared for the voracious guests. Severus, Theodoric, and thirteen Antrusthions, or Frank lords, the friends of Theodoric, presided at the separate tables; each was surrounded by about twenty brave warriors, called his *leuds*, or companions, to whom he did the honours of the repast. These *leuds* voluntarily associated with him *in whom they placed their trust:* for such was the signification of the title ANTRUSTHION, and whom they made it a point of honour to second both in peace and in war. The wine and the beer, or *cerevisia*, flowed abundantly on all the boards: several of the warriors had brought with them, instead of a goblet, the skull of some enemy, who had fallen under their sword, and which they had chased in silver as a monument of their victory. Minstrels and German bards celebrated the ancient exploits of the divers races who had united under the name of

Franks, and the palace of Severus rang with loud shouts of joy.

When their minds were somewhat heated, but ere the feast had become a mere carousal, Theodoric called the Antrusthions into the largest hall; each arrived, followed by all the *leuds* who sat at his table. "Noble Franks," said Theodoric, "our host, the senator Julius "Severus, my friend, the friend of our nation, "hath received a mortal injury from a priest of "the god of the Christians: his only daughter, "the support of his house, the comfort of his old "age, hath been wrested from him by treach-"ery; now a captive, she pines in one of "those prisons they call cloisters. Shall we "allow the friend of the Franks to be insulted "by a priest? Let us do him justice; away—"let us taste the wines of the banks of the "Loire;—away, let us demand of the monks of "Tours some share of their treasures. You who "will follow us, raise your battleaxes."

A few of the *leuds* declared they would have nothing to do with the priests, and were resolved on not provoking the anger of the Christian god. Those sat down, and soon after withdrew; but the greater part replied to Theodoric with the shout "*Away to Tours, to Tours;*" at the same time they clashed their battleaxes in the air, and

thus plighted their faith to undertake the expedition. Their chieftains bade them prepare for march on the following morn. They counted those who had entered into the voluntary engagement, and found they amounted to two hundred and ninety-three; they then returned to the table, and their carousals continued the greater part of the night.

CHAP. V.

A PUBLIC CONFRONTATION.

"All who dwelt in the vicinity, the monks, the men, the "women, moved with great devotion, eagerly crowded to "this spot, where several of them miraculously cured of "divers diseases, exalted and celebrated his praises with "joy, whilst the multitude sang and wept, at the same time, "around the body of the holy martyr."—*Vita Sancti Leodegarii, Episc. cap.* xvii. *p.* 625.

WITH Felix time passed in wearisome monotony. He was, as he had previously been instructed, compelled to attend in the choirs of the cathedral two hours in the night, three hours in the morning, and the same time in the evening: he was also obliged to spend, three times every day, a whole hour at his repast in the refectory, during which the gospel was read by one of the friars; then half an hour at what the monks called holy meditation; and lastly, he was forced to assist twice a day for an hour at the recital of the litanies or church service.

The interval of these various devout exercises was the only time allotted to him for a repose thus incessantly interrupted. The rule to which he was subjected began to produce on the mind of Felix the same effects as on the monks whose mode of life he was compelled to follow. Although his thoughts remained in torpid sleep, his attention was continually and forcibly awakened: although buried as it were in idleness, he was aroused to incessant action: although his heart and mind were wandering on other subjects, the same sound was ever dinning his ears: thus situated, his moral faculties were absorbed in listless stupor—a stupor which he felt daily growing upon him, but which it was impossible to shake off. His present quiet but irksome existence was to him a punishment far more insupportable than the most violent storms of social life; he even began to regret those moments of cruel anxiety when dangers on all sides surrounded himself and the objects of his tenderest regard; for in those moments he at least felt the spring of conscious life, whereas now he found it impossible to overcome the lethargy which had taken possession of his soul.

Yet however disagreeable his present situation, and that of his beloved Julia might be,

Felix could not believe they were exposed to any very serious danger. He was in the midst of a numerous society of men, consecrated to religion, who appeared sincere in their zeal and enthusiasm, and on whose countenances he observed no traces of malignancy. The monks seemed to him beings whose faculties were stupified by the extreme monotony of their existence; and who possessed not a single idea beyond the regulations to which they were subjected; who, exhausted by eight hours' singing, and two of prayer, thought they piously filled up the remainder of their time by sleeping and eating; men who would employ, without hesitation, the strength of their arms in maintaining the discipline of their convent; but who, it is probable, would not be accessary to a perfidious or cruel action: who, in short, were become so very indifferent to every thing, except themselves, that Felix conceived it to be no less impossible to awaken their hatred, than it was, from his own experience, to excite their curiosity.

Felix had no occasion for the prudence which father Andrew had recommended, in repelling all approaches to confidence. No one sought his, no one had shewn that interest in his affairs of which his adviser had admonished him to be-

ware. He almost regretted they had made no attempt to read his thoughts; for it would have given him less pain to be deceived by a false commiseration, than to be so completely abandoned. He wished for some of the illusions of life, rather than the absolute solitude of the grave. But all his efforts to form an attachment with any of the men with whom he associated nearly the whole of the day and a part of the night, were vain: all his attempts to excite some kind of interest, by relating his history, had been repulsed by a cold and stupid insensibility: all his questions could draw forth no more than a few insignificant monosyllables, by way of reply: all his entreaties to see either Volusianus, some one of the dignified ecclesiastics, or father Andrew, were rejected with the single word *impossible*.

Judge of his lively joy, when on the fifth or sixth day of his captivity, he found, on returning to his cell, on the bed where he was going to repose, the following note:—

"My son, I have not ceased to think of the "danger which you believe your mother's health, "nay, even her life, would be exposed to, if she "remained ignorant of your fate. I am bound "to obedience and secrecy by solemn vows, by "the duties of my profession, by all the canons

"of the church. On the other hand your entreaty "to save your mother, appears to me both "pious and just. Thus compelled to choose be-"tween duties which appear opposed to each "other, I have implored God to enlighten my "understanding. At length I am come to a "resolution, and may it please the Almighty "that it be conformable to his inspirations, that "it may appease the remorse which I feel for "what I have already done. Write to your "mother, calm her fears on the score of your "health and safety; but tell her that for the "present all her efforts for your deliverance "would but turn to your destruction. Refrain, "above all, from indicating in the slightest de-"gree the place of your detention; let what "you write be short and without artifice; leave "it in the place where you find this, and it "shall be conveyed to your mother."

Although this letter was without signature, Felix knew that it must be written by father Andrew; he observed that a new species of doubt had arisen in the mind of this honest ecclesiastic; he seemed to hesitate about the extent of obedience due from a priest to his bishop. Perhaps father Andrew, who knew the truth, was indignant at the false colours in which Volusianus represented his abduction. He rejoiced

at having an invisible friend in his captivity, on whom he could the more depend, as he became so by the suggestions of conscience. He felt no surprise that father Andrew had been able to enter his cell during the time he was constrained to pass in the chancel; he therefore wrote the letter which was afterwards transmitted to his mother. He added another note, designed for father Andrew, but without address, in which he entreated that venerable priest to favour him with some information respecting his own destiny and that of his beloved Julia; to enlighten him with his counsels upon the conduct he ought to pursue; and lastly, to procure him the consolation of an interview, and thus enable him to see a human being who would listen to him, who would understand him, who would feel for him: this second note remained unanswered.

The anxiety of Felix concerning Julia tormented him to a degree almost insupportable. Since he had been in the convent, even her name had not been pronounced in his hearing. Of all the expedients which the two lovers had devised for imparting to each other some tidings of their existence, not one had been found practicable. They reckoned upon being surrounded in their captivity by inferiors, slaves, persons

over whom money would have some influence: Felix on the contrary, saw only men, who, in sanctity at least, thought themselves his superiors; who felt no regard for him, who had no interest in pleasing him, to whom he had not the smallest power to do either good or harm. What could ever induce men without passions to render him any service? Above all, how could he request them to break a monastic rule, which they considered as the emanation of sovereign wisdom and virtue?

The attempts which he might have made to communicate with Julia, without the assistance of his companions, admitted not the slightest hope of success. Although the two convents occupied opposite sides of the same court, no cell in either of the buildings had a window opening in that direction. The part adjoining the quadrangle was altogether appropriated to the large halls, the refectory, the kitchens, and the galleries, the windows of which were out of the reach of persons in the inside. The space Felix had the liberty of perambulating, within the walls of the cloister, was extremely limited. It is true he went three times a day in the procession of the monks to the chancel, with which the nunnery communicated by in-

terior passages; but that part of the church was separated from the rest by a high balustrade, and he was never permitted to go there alone. In every part of the convent he met with barred doors and grated windows; and if, during the hours of rest, he walked in the small portion of the galleries which he had access to, he saw nothing but the naked walls of the convent; he met not a single living creature; he heard no sound, save the distant and monotonous chant of processions, which every three hours went to and returned from the church.

Felix was not only desirous to have news from his family; he wished almost as ardently to know what was at that time passing in Gaul. He was also anxious to learn by what means the king of the Franks had been informed of their captivity: whether he still thought of marrying the daughter of Severus; whether the latter had prevailed on Clovis to effect their deliverance; if the senator had any suspicion of the dignity with which their ravishers were invested. It was equally important for him to know what progress had been made by the contending factions of the court of Soissons, and whether the rivals of Severus had succeeded in directing the views of Clovis to another point. However dis-

agreeable might be their captivity, he was sensible that it had sheltered them from an evil which their own strength could not possibly have enabled them to overcome—the marriage of Julia with Clovis; therefore he preferred remaining silent, and making no effort to recover his liberty, or disclose his retreat until he was assured that Clovis had made another choice. On the other hand he was aware that the very moment the danger had passed, it would be necessary to make vigorous efforts to obtain his liberation, for he had every reason to fear that Volusianus had the intention of prolonging their captivity even till they ceased to exist. All the policy of the prelate was bent upon gaining the favour and protection of Clovis: but if the king of the Franks should once know by what act of violence he had hindered the accomplishment of his designs, he would doubtless conceive against him an implacable resentment. The perpetual confinement, or the death of the two prisoners, could alone shelter him from the dangerous consequences of a discovery.

Notwithstanding the ardent desire of Felix to learn what was passing upon the Loire, the Seine, and the Oise, it was impossible to obtain any information from the monks. It was still less their reserve than their ignorance that

hindered them from satisfying his curiosity. Indifferent to all worldly concerns, neither comprehending, nor seeking to comprehend, political science, they had learnt no more than the names of some of the barbarian chiefs, who were burning the cities, and ravaging the fields of their native country; and when they had inscribed in the chronicle of their convent an account of their expeditions, which never exceeded two lines, they fancied they had entered there the history of the whole year. This was all they had learnt, or ever wished to learn, concerning public events. More than once Felix had heard them at table, in the chancel, on retiring to their cells, exchange a few words with each other; and having renounced all hopes of obtaining any confidential information, he had redoubled his attention to catch their broken dialogues, as they passed his ears, which might perhaps furnish him with some intelligence relative to that which it was so much his interest to know. But never did he hear the monks speak upon any other subject, than the manner in which their last meal had been cooked, or the orders which the superior had given for the government of the house. It was, therefore, with great astonishment, that one day, in the beginning of December, as he was in the chancel, he

remarked the extreme agitation of the faithful, spread over the other parts of the church, who all rushed towards the door, at the same time that he heard the sound of warlike music, which he instantly recognized as that of the Franks.

Sylvia Numantia, and Julius Severus, who were then entering Tours with the small army, commanded by Theodoric, had not remained entirely ignorant of the fate of Felix. On the same day that Severus had passed the Loire, opposite Noviliacum, Sylvia, who had facilitated his passage, and had feasted his soldiers, whom she considered as deliverers, received a letter from Volusianus, bearing no very recent date. Nevertheless, as there was no visible reason for its delay, Severus guessed that the prelate of Tours had not written to her, until, warned of the approach of the Franks, he despaired of being able to conceal Felix any longer from their search. The letter was couched in the following words:—

"*The apostolical Volusianus to the matron Sylvia "Numantia,* GREETING."

"We sought to mitigate your sufferings by "the letter which, within these few days, we "addressed to you. The time is come, when, "contrary to our inclination, we find our-"selves under the necessity of rendering your

" grief more acute. You were then weeping
" for a son whom you had lost, but all your
" fears were confined to this terrestrial life,
" which saints may rejoice in losing. Learn
" that his immortal soul is in still greater danger.
" He is possessed of an unclean spirit, and
" without the prayers of a holy recluse of our
" convent, who has rescued him from the fangs
" of the king of darkness, he would at this mo-
" ment be plunged into the gulfs of hell. Orders
" have been given to administer the only re-
" medy, which is applicable to his soul. Your
" son is now following the rules of our brethren,
" who, in consideration of the services he has
" rendered us, have deigned to receive him
" into their convent. He assists at our holy
" exercises, at our perpetual *psallentium*, that
" singular glory of the church of Tours, also at
" the litanies, and at the prayers. The unclean
" spirit, dreading the company of so many de-
" vout persons, seems now to leave him some
" repose. He is calm, and it is but rarely he
" is seen to fall into convulsions or fits of fury.
" But when he speaks he utters nought, save
" the illusions of his distempered brain. How
" can we give credence to any of his words?
" Are they not dictated by him who was ever
" the father of lies? It appears that the wretched

"daughter of the apostate had seduced him "by her impious wiles. Often he asks for her; "he relates his pretended voyage with her; "our brethren, however, return him no answer; "not even do they listen to him; for the utter-"ings of the spirit of darkness corrupt the ears "of those who hear them. As for the wretched "woman, whom he thinks he has seen, of her "we have had no tidings. We suppose that she "is already in that terrible place, where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth; where her fa-"ther will speedily join her. Seek not for your "son until the grace of the ever-blessed St. "Martin has worked upon his mind, has "driven out its fits of rage, its vain delusions, "and its deceitful remembrances."

Although Sylvia was in general disposed to place much confidence in a prelate of the church, and above all in Volusianus, she was struck with the spirit of hypocrisy which Severus pointed out in this letter, and she by no means renounced her ardent desire to see her son, and to rescue him from the convent. Julius Severus strove to confirm her in this disposition, and to increase her distrust of the pious frauds, which the priests might think proper to practise. For himself he had not read, without shuddering, what the bishop of Tours had hinted respecting

the fate of his daughter. He could not, however, believe that his enemies had been so atrocious as to put an end to her existence. Her captivity was sufficient for their purpose, and the most cruel of men must have hesitated, ere they committed so dreadful a crime, without a motive. He had no doubt that Julia was shut up in one of the dark dungeons which belonged to the church; that what Volusianus had said of her, was designed to terrify him, and deter him from prosecuting his inquiries. But it produced the contrary effect; he judged that the moment was now come, when every means of rescuing her from the hands of the priests should be had recourse to. Assured of meeting Felix Florentius at Tours, he hoped to obtain from him much information on the subject; and he calculated that the zeal of a lover, joined to that of a father, would easily triumph over the artifices of the arch-priest; for all thoughts of a marriage between his daughter and Clovis being abandoned, the alliance of Felix Florentius now appeared to him both honourable and advantageous.

Julius Severus engaged Sylvia Numantia to accompany the small army of the Franks to Tours, and there to demand the instant restoration of her son. The citizens of Tours made no resistance, the gates were thrown open to

Theodoric as soon as he presented himself before them. Volusianus, encircled by a train of priests, and preceded by relics, lighted tapers, and the smoke of incense, advanced to meet him. Although the Franks belonging to this expedition were all pagans, yet the sight of the venerable old men who advanced in solemn procession, their long beards, the pomp of their pontifical robes, their pacific demeanour, and the bold confidence with which they came to meet warriors, inspired them with involuntary respect. They lowered their bucklers and leant on their *angons*, or short javelins, and contemplated with astonishment, unmixed with anger, this procession, which presented nothing to oppose them but chants and the smoke of tapers. At the same time Julius Severus, Sylvia, and Theodoric, stepped from their ranks to confer with Volusianus.

However much offended Julius Severus was, and however violent the resentment which he cherished within his breast, he had too much the manners and habits of a courtier to suffer his hatred to appear when he requested the bishop of Tours to restore his daughter and his friend to instant liberty. Theodoric and Sylvia made the same demand. Volusianus addressed his answer principally to Theodoric; he declared his attachment to the nation of the

Franks, his respect for their king, his desire to establish, upon this, their first visit, such ties of hospitality between them and the inhabitants of Tours, as might last for ever, and to conform to every wish of theirs, which was compatible with his duties. At the same time he requested that the noble Franks, according to the laws of hospitality, would share the festivities of his table before they proceeded to treat of business; he then caused a copious repast to be served up in the vestibule of the convent, to which the Franks eagerly sat down, without waiting for the consent of their chief.

In the mean time the church bells summoned the inhabitants of Tours to assemble in the cathedral. Although the arrival of the Franks excited uneasiness among the people, yet their feelings of devotion were redoubled by this event: the assembly was rapidly formed, it was numerous, and composed of more women than men; it was enthusiastic, full of faith, of gratitude, and of confidence in its pastor. Priests, scattered over the different parts of the church, contributed, by their discourse and their example, to animate and direct a zeal already so fervent.

A monk ascended the pulpit, and taking for his text, these words of the first epistle of St.

John: "In this the children of God are mani-
"fest, and the children of the devil," he an-
nounced to the faithful, that a new miracle had
just declared the power and benevolence of their
patron St. Martin. This miracle was to spread
a light, by so much the more resplendent, as the
gentiles themselves would feel its effects; on
the other hand he invited the faithful to give
glory to God in the sight of the Franks, when
his works should be manifested. He informed
them in what manner Felix Florentius, seduced
by the daughter of an idolater, had permitted
scepticism to take root in his mind. "As soon
"as his faith was shaken," said the monk, "the
"wretched sinner began to feel himself under
"the empire of the devil, who carried him off,
"in broad day-light, in the presence of his mo-
"ther, of his ancient preceptor, a man more
"than half an infidel, who perhaps, in his heart,
"still sighs for the worship of idols, in the
"presence, lastly, of a numerous troop of domes-
"tics, who were unable to protect him. Thus
"do we see the weakness of man, whatever may
"be his worldly greatness, when he abandons
"the sacred doctrines of the church. All might
"have seen the very rocks of Hesodunum move
"from their places, block up the passages, and
"inclose him, together with her who wished to

" to lead him to destruction, in the ruins conse-
" crated to the false gods. Already was he floun-
" dering in the gulfs of hell, already was his soul
" fast approaching the streams of sulphur and boil-
" ing pitch, when a venerable recluse of our mo-
" nastery, father Andrew, on his knees, before the
" tomb of the blessed St. Martin, became acquaint-
" ed with the works of the demon. By the power
" of his prayers, he delivered the captive soul.
" At the very moment he lay devoutly prostrate
" before the shrine, his image appeared to the
" unhappy Felix, and rescued him from our com-
" mon enemy. Andrew, in holy diffidence ac-
" knowledges not the miracle, he refuses the glory
" we are desirous of giving him, and leaves it
" entirely to God. Felix, in the mean time, was
" laid at the gate of our convent, and since the
" Franks are come to demand him, to them
" shall he be restored; but first you, my bre-
" thren, shall see him, you shall hear him. The
" apostolical Volusianus, in order to give glory
" to God, has commanded that the whole trans-
" action be public. You shall hear how the
" spirit of darkness, who now speaks through
" the mouth of Felix, no longer able to employ
" force, attempts to impose upon us by artifice;
" you shall hear the demon himself seeking
" to disguise the truth. You it behoves, my

" brethren, to command his silence; the voice of
" the people is the voice of God; let then the
" voice of the people prevail over the voice of
" the devil!"

The orator had scarcely finished, when Volusianus entered the church at the head of his clergy, by one of the side doors; Theodoric entered by the other at the head of his Franks, who drew up at the bottom of the cathedral. Julius Severus remained between the two parties. Volusianus had assigned to Sylvia a distinguished place among the women. Although the Franks had already seen the pomp of the churches of Soissons, Paris, and Rheims, they gazed with astonishment on the splendid display of wealth, the brilliant light of the tapers, the smoke of incense arising in clouds to the roof of the temple, and the numerous troops of priests, habited in the full magnificence of their pontifical robes.

Whilst the barbarians were beholding with an eye of astonishment, and perhaps of covetousness, these riches of the sanctuary, a man, who from his dress and arms, appeared to be a Frank, though neither Theodoric nor his companions knew him, started from the ranks, and boldly advancing to the nearest altar, seized a massy silver candlestick. Instantly

the soldier dropped it, with a terrific scream, and falling, rolled to the bottom of the altar steps, where he remained in the most terrible convulsions, now uttering inarticulate sounds, then again making the whole church to ring with his dreadful howlings. The priests at length approached him, and, apparently from charitable motives, covered him with a cloak, that he might not be known; they then replaced the candlestick on the altar, raised up the man whose convulsions still continued, and carried him away to the infirmary of the convent, whilst the people made the church echo with the cries of "a miracle!" "a miracle!" "glory to the "blessed St. Martin!"

The shouts had scarcely subsided, when Volusianus admonished the faithful, saying that an accident of such frequent occurrence in the church of Tours, many of which they must have seen during the year, ought no longer to withdraw their attention from a much more wonderful circumstance, to witness which they had been summoned.

"Stand forth, son of the senator Florentius," said he to Felix, whom the monks now led forward, and who, the instant he heard the music of the Franks, had been taken to his cell, and therefore knew nothing of what was passing;

"stand forth, and pay homage to the truth in "the presence of this assembled people. Speak, "what woman did you meet in the ruins of Heso-"dunum; what woman did you support with "your arm, as you came out of the ancient "fortress?"

"Julia," replied Felix, "daughter to the se-"nator and count of Chartres, Julius Severus."

"The daughter of the impious apostate, the "idolater," cried immediately a thousand voices, in every part of the church.

"Were you not suddenly plunged into deep "darkness, in a cavern without an opening? "Did not the rocks oppose your passage?"

"The stone gates of the cavern were certainly "closed upon us, and we remained in dark-"ness."

"A miracle! a miracle!" exclaimed the multitude; "darkness did you seek with the idola-"ter, and darkness was your portion."

"Did you remain alone in the dark, or did "any one approach you?"

"Violent hands seized my companion, and "attempted to wrest her from me—"

"A miracle! a miracle!" repeated the crowd, "the prince of darkness came to carry off his "prey."

"What is the name of the religious man

"you thought you saw near you when light "was restored?"

"He told me his name was father Andrew."

"Ah! the blessed father Andrew! Father An- "drew the powerful intercessor!" said the people, "protect us, deliver us from all evil."

"Were you not bound with cords? Did "not father Andrew cause them to drop from "your hands?"

"He commanded the cords to be taken off "with which he himself had ordered me to be "bound."

"Hear him—ungrateful wretch that he is;" cried the people, "he accuses his benefactor, "his deliverer."

"Citizens of Tours," said Felix, "I was "charged with a negotiation for your interest; "it was for your sake, in your defence, that I "trusted myself in the hands of the barbarians, "that I treated with Clovis at Soissons, that I "obtained for you his protection, and saved you "from the attacks of the Franks. I had just "rendered you these services, when I was un- "justly seized, forcibly bound, and dragged "into this convent, where until now I have "been immured as a prisoner."

"The Franks are in this very temple," replied Volusianus, "and you yourself are the

" cause that they are here; is this what you call
" saving us from the attacks of the Franks?
" But let us proceed. Did not father Andrew
" make you eat of the bread of the Lord, and
" drink of his cup?"

" Yes, he caused a slight repast to be spread
" in the ruins of Hesodunum."

" The bread of life. The cup of redemp-
" tion," cried the people.

" Did you perceive the manner in which
" father Andrew transported you to the gate of
" our convent?"

" No, my eyes were covered with the cowl of
" these monkish weeds, which, when my hands
" were tied, they forced me to wear."

" But did you perceive any rough motion of
" horses or carriages?"

" No, on the contrary, methought I glided
" down the Loire in a boat."

" What motion can be more gentle than
" that of angels' wings!" cried the people, to whom the monks, spread over the different parts of the church, often suggested remarks, which the people afterwards proclaimed aloud.

" Accursed be the pretended angels who car-
" ried me away," exclaimed Felix with great warmth. " One of them I threw on the earth
" in the cavern of Hesodunum; with this hand

"I griped his throat; would to God I had "strangled him."

"The demoniac is raving; the unclean spirit "has resumed his empire," cried the spectators.

The priests immediately began to thunder out the litanies appointed for the deliverance of the possessed, and to deluge Felix with holy water; finding that anger was useless, he repressed his feelings, and resuming an appearance of tranquillity, turned to Volusianus, and begged him to continue.

"What do you suppose," said Volusianus, "is become of the wretched daughter of Se-"verus?"

"We came together into the court close by, "and whilst I entered into the convent of the "men, she was taken into that of the women."

"I desire my brethren," said Volusianus, "that by this you do all judge of the number-"less illusions to which the unfortunate young "man has been the prey. From the moment "when, in the violence of his derangement, he "laid sacrilegious hands on an anointed of the "Lord, what he thought he saw, had no longer "any shape, what he fancied he heard, had "no longer any sound, and what he imagined "he touched, had no longer any substance.

"He fancied that the daughter of the infidel "had entered into our sacred inclosures. You "know under what severe regulations those "holy virgins live, who have placed themselves "under the protection of the blessed St. Martin. "How could Julia have entered there without my "order? How could she have departed thence "without my permission? Now shall you be "convinced that she is not in the convent. "The eyes of men must surely not defile its "sacred walls. But for the sake of the Franks, "who are not yet enlightened by faith, and "to accomplish the triumph of truth, I grant "the pious matron, Sylvia Numantia, and "the women whom she shall choose, a dis-"pensation of our rule. Let them enter the "convent; let them examine every part of it "from one extremity to the other, and then "return and tell us if the daughter of Julius "Severus be there, or if there remain any ap-"pearance of her having been in the convent. "Go," said he to one of the officers, "conduct "Sylvia and her attendants to the convent."

Sylvia, accompanied by twelve matrons of Tours, entered the convent. She surveyed every part of it; visited every hall, every cell, and even the most secret places; they led her, with apparent indifference, into the subterraneous

dungeons, the damp walls and deep darkness of which filled her with horror. They opened several trap-doors, apparently intended to conceal the victims of monastic despotism; the vaults thus unclosed were empty; they made her even visit the tombs, and without expressing the idea they wished to convey, they took pains to convince her that no living being was shut up among the dead; that no corse had been recently deposited in the sepulchre. After a minute search, Sylvia, overwhelmed with grief, returned, and declared to Julius Severus, to Felix, and to the whole assembly, that the friend she sought was not in the convent. This report, which was received by Severus and Felix with extreme anguish, was greeted by the people with every demonstration of joy and triumph, as if it cleared up every doubt respecting the authenticity of the miracle. The priests pronounced a canticle of thanksgiving, repeating which the crowd dispersed.

CHAP. VI.

FATHER ANDREW.

"Without heresy it cannot be asserted that in ecclesiasti-
"cal affairs, any one can dispense with obedience to the
"priest of the Lord, or to the bishop to whom he has com-
"mitted the care of his flock; nor that any one can assume a
"power which neither God nor man has confided to us."—
Gregory of Tours, book 2, *chap.* 23, *p.* 173.

AFTER the triumph Volusianus had just obtained, no very important advantage could accrue from detaining Felix at Tours. The belief that he had been miraculously brought to the convent of St. Martin, was firmly established among the people; they who had assisted at the confrontation, fancied the miracle was confirmed by his own confession; after this all the explanations Felix gave, all the circumstances he related concerning his captivity, were not sufficient to destroy the general impression. The Franks, who, generally speaking, could not understand what had been said, but had wit-

nessed the examination of Felix, and the effect it had upon the people, were rather inclined to confirm than to contradict the pretended miracle: there was no doubt they would confirm what St. Remy had reported to Clovis respecting the adventure at Hesodunum; and that king, who had already given as great proofs of his credulity as of his bravery, would not be unwilling to believe that his bride had been carried off by devils, provided Julia herself did not re-appear to belie the reports of the two prelates, the inhabitants of Tours, and the soldiers of Theodoric.

The monks who stood around Felix consequently allowed him to approach his mother and to embrace her as she was about to enter the nunnery: after which he was permitted to remain by the side of Julius Severus and the Franks, with whom he quitted the church as soon as Sylvia declared her researches had been unsuccessful.

But Felix now thought little of the liberty he had just regained: he was absorbed in sorrow; and although he strove to comfort Julius Severus; although he assured him, that from his own observations he thought the priests and monks into whose hands he had fallen were incapable of any atrocious crime, still his imagination

was filled with most dreadful forebodings. Sometimes he pictured to himself Julia immured in a subterraneous dungeon, deprived of all communication with human creatures, that her existence might remain unknown; at other times he shuddered at the thought that she might already have fallen a sacrifice to the fanaticism and political wickedness of men who, when they mentioned her name, never failed to hint they thought her worthy of death.

Sylvia's researches in the convent had proved to her the horrid situation of a captive in the power of the nuns; some of the dungeons she had entered left in her mind an inexpressible impression of terror, which often escaped her, in spite of her efforts to conceal it.

Julius Severus, on his side, augmented the alarm of Felix and his mother, by communicating to them the measures he had already taken, but which, as yet had been unsuccessful. Foreseeing that at his approach Volusianus might be tempted to remove his captive to a distance, he had beforehand posted on all the roads near Tours, trusty individuals to observe the travellers, and in case of need, to carry them off by main force: he had gained over some spies even in the cathedral, and Lamia had procured him the assistance of two bagaudæ, who had

shared in the seizure of Felix and Julia, and had afterwards taken them to Tours: these two fugitives gave most exact information relative to all the circumstances of that adventure; but since that time they had heard no more of Julia, and knew not what was become of her. Severus had reckoned more upon them than on the Franks, for the recovery of his daughter. He had hoped those bagaudæ would have been aware of the time when Volusianus caused his daughter to depart, and advise Dumnorix thereof: this latter, with a certain number of shepherds, lay concealed in the woods near Tours, ready to deliver Julia from the hands of her ravishers. All these precautions had been taken in vain: the spies could give no information; Dumnorix had made no discovery; and the other agents of Severus, keeping watch on the different roads, had seen no travellers pass.

"We have but one expedient left," said Severus: "let us take off Volusianus himself, "and his head shall answer for my daughter."

"I doubt," replied Sylvia, "whether such a "man would reveal his secret and discover his "infamy, even to save his head."—

"And I," observed Theodoric, "doubt much "whether my Franks would raise their hands "against him. The priest appears to them

"more than a man, above all since they saw "that fellow disguised in the Frank dress fall "down after stretching forth his hand to seize "the candlestick."

"I have still some hopes," said Sylvia, "that "this farce is only designed to impose upon "the vulgar. Volusianus cannot seriously be-"lieve we shall add faith to the prodigies he "narrates, rather than to the evidence of our "own senses, when I myself witnessed the "seizure, when Felix, one of the victims, is "here present, and can point out the very spot "where he was separated from Julia. Let us "go once more to the prelate, but without so "many attendants; he will surely give to us a "more rational answer."

"Volusianus has spoken for the people," replied Severus, "because it is for the opinion of "the people alone that he cares: he feels mean-"while a cruel pleasure in speaking to us as to "children, and injuring us as men."

"Let me speak to the priest," said Theodoric; "I can see pretty clearly that the prison "of the captive must be opened by the battle-"axe, not by honied words."

Felix, Severus, Theodoric, and Sylvia immediately proceeded to the bishop's palace, and demanded a private audience of Volusianus, which

they obtained without difficulty. The prelate did not appear at all embarrassed by their presence; he did not avoid resuming the subject of the former discussion; but to their most pressing intreaties he opposed a tone of fervour, conviction, and paternal affection which entirely disconcerted them, and gave them no opportunity to threaten him, although such was their object in demanding the interview. "It belongeth not "to me," said he, "to explain the ways of the "Almighty, or to give reasons for his mira-"cles by human means; Felix was delivered "to my hands in a miraculous manner. It "would have conduced to his salvation had he "continued the devout exercises he had com-"menced in the temple of God; but now he is "free, at least he wears no chain but that of sin. "Julia, who, perhaps, was laden with heavier "shackles, would also have been liberated by "me had she been conducted to the same place. "I feel for the distressing anxiety of a father, a "lover, a friend; no other assistance can I offer "to you but that of my prayers; they at least "shall be as fervent as sincere; be assured also "that I shall never regard as an offence, the in-"jurious suspicions and the violent language "wrested from you by your agonizing situation,

" and by an error you cannot repel from your " minds."

His meekness was constantly evinced, in spite of the direct accusations and furious threats which despair dictated to Severus and Felix. He seemed ever above insult, causing it to sink before him, so that he appeared great even in the eyes of his accusers. " Your life shall an- " swer for hers," at length cried Felix, with the impulse of maddened grief.

" For thine eternal salvation do I answer be- " fore God," replied he with the voice of affection, " to save that joyfully would I part with " mortal life: in the violence with which thou " threatenest me I see no danger save that of " thine own soul."

" If you have any feeling for the agonies of a " father," said Severus, " blush at holding a " language which can deceive none but children " or an ignorant rabble. You see before you " senators and soldiers—to them, at least, speak " as to men."

" I know well," replied Volusianus, " that " with the infidel the truth of faith is deemed a " folly. But I should blush indeed, were I, from " respect to man to disguise it, or to fit my lan- " guage to the dignity of those who listen to me."

"Old man," at length exclaimed Theodoric, "I am come with my Franks to witness deeds, "not to hear words; restore to this Gaul whom "the Franks honour, his daughter, thy captive, "or with this hand, which I now lift over thy "head, will I fasten thy beard to the tail of my "horse, and thus drag thee to the forests of "Toxandria."

"God grant there may remain to me," calmly replied Volusianus, "strength enough on my "arrival to bless the Franks: gladly will I thus "commence the work of the Lord, which other "apostles, more fortunate than I, will some day "complete. Thou shalt find me prepared both "to preach the word of God and to suffer holy "martyrdom."

A Frank never heard with indifference the language of true courage—Theodoric drew back, struck with involuntary respect for the aged prelate.

Felix was almost persuaded that Volusianus was himself in error: he wished to believe that such unshaken firmness was that of virtue. He asked to see father Andrew, to hear him explain the nature of his mission to Hesodunum; but Volusianus replied, that father Andrew had quitted Tours more than a week since; he was gone on a mission concerning ecclesiastical af-

fairs; and as he was to make an extensive circuit, it was impossible to say in what place he might now be met with.

Julius Severus knew other witnesses, other agents, employed in the seizure of his daughter: these were the two bagaudæ, who had conducted father Andrew to the ruins of Hesodunum, and who now, gained over by Lamia, served as spies for Severus in the cathedral. But these two unfortunate wretches had so lively a sense of the danger to which they would be exposed by offending the archbishop and clergy of Tours, that it was impossible to make them speak publicly. It now appeared certain the conference could not have a favourable result; Severus, therefore, retired with his friends, but declared his intention of remaining at Tours for the purpose of continuing his researches.

The first thought of Severus was to attack the palace of the archbishop in the night, to seize Volusianus, with the abbess of the convent of St. Mary, and some other hostages, and to carry them over to Chartres: but the leaders of the Franks, or Antrusthions, when consulted, refused to execute this design. They declared, they and their soldiers had already eaten of the bread of Volusianus, and sat at his table, and therefore would never commit any violence

against him. This respect for the laws of hospitality was not always so powerful over their minds; but the prelate of Tours appeared to them a superhuman being, and they never turned their eyes towards him without dread: Severus could, consequently, expect no assistance from them in the furtherance of his plans.

Severus now consulted the two bagaudæ whom Lamia had attached to his interest: he hoped he should discover by their means some other of the agents employed to seize his daughter. But the only new information he could obtain, was, that father Andrew had been sent to Poitiers, and that his departure had been veiled in the deepest mystery.

This departure of father Andrew for Poitiers appeared to Felix as a ray of light. The authors of their seizure had selected that priest to bring them to Tours, it was therefore probable they might also have chosen him to accompany Julia when circumstances rendered it necessary to remove her still farther. Felix now felt certain that Julia had been conducted to some convent of Poitiers, or, if she had not been left in that neighbourhood, he thought at least that father Andrew in passing through that city, and not thinking himself pursued, would have been less cautious in concealing his subsequent route. It

was also to be observed that since Felix had been in the power of the priests, father Andrew was the only man who had told him the truth, unmixt with fraud; he was the only man who, although implicitly obeying the orders of his superiors, evinced sincere compassion for the woes he had himself caused, and testified an unfeigned desire to serve his victim. Felix was far from expecting that Andrew in his wish to assist him would swerve from any of the orders he had received, but he thought that priest would not deceive him; and that could either information, comfort, or hope be given, Andrew, at least, would not deny it. He resolved, therefore, to depart immediately for Poitiers, leaving Severus and his mother at Tours with Theodoric and the Franks. In order, if possible, to gain some information respecting the fate of Julia, these latter were to use, in turn, promises and threats with the subalterns of the cathedral, with all, in short, who might be enticed by the hope of reward, or terrified by the fear of punishment.

Severus and Sylvia, seeing that all hopes of terrifying Volusianus by means of the Franks were fled, approved of Felix's intended journey. Diocles, who had accompanied Sylvia to Tours with the horses and luggage of his master, whom

they hoped to bring back to Noviliacum, was ordered to keep all in readiness for his departure. Severus wrote to the Roman Count Gallus, the governor of Poitiers, and to the Goth Œgila, who commanded a small band of soldiers in the pay of Alaric the Second: he recommended them to assist his friend and intended son-in-law in the researches he was about to make for Julia. He was acquainted, and had some interest, with those officers. Felix Florentius had also had occasion to correspond with Adelphius, bishop of Poitiers: this prelate was not less a secret enemy to the Visigoths whom he obeyed, and a favourer of the Franks, than Volusianus; but the authority of Adelphius in Poitiers was far from equalling that of the bishop of Tours; his power was limited by that of the Roman count and the Visigoth commander; and although he might be ill-disposed, Felix had reason to believe that should Julia be in Poitiers he could succeed in restoring her to liberty.

After a journey of two days Felix arrived at Poitiers, and, aided by the inquiries of Diocles, soon discovered the dwelling of father Andrew. He presented himself before the priest, and was struck with the extraordinary change he observed in his countenance: his cheeks were now

pallid, his eyes hollow, and sorrow had imprinted its deep furrows on his brow; grief had succeeded to that air of gentle confidence and peaceful conscience which formerly characterized his physiognomy. When Andrew saw Felix enter his cell, a ray of joy beamed in his eyes. "Praised be the Almighty," cried he, "one at "least of the victims of my fatal obedience is "restored to liberty; but where is the other? "What account can I render of her before the "judgment-seat of God?"

"From you," replied Felix, alarmed by this exclamation, "from you I come to seek infor-"mation respecting her. Can it be that you "know not what is become of Julia Severa?"

"Volusianus took care not to confide to me "a secret I should never have kept. Wo to "me! for I listened to the voice of man rather "than to the voice of God! Wo to me! for I "thought my own judgment and conscience "should yield to canonical obedience. By ful-"filling the orders of my bishop I fancied I "should preserve Gaul from a deadly apostacy; "I fancied I was only executing the mandates "of rigid justice against persons already con-"demned by the canons of the church. Me he "deluded respecting the faith of Julia, and her "projects, and the dangers with which he said

"we were threatened. The people he hath de-
"luded respecting the means employed to com-
"plete his designs: he hath given to the angels
"of heaven what was the work of his own sinful
"hands; he hath blazoned false miracles; he
"hath pretended that I swayed demons and
"angels, while I, poor unhappy sinner, am bit-
"terly bewailing the crime he hath made me to
"commit."

All the hopes of Felix vanished as soon as he heard Andrew ask tidings of Julia. He already began, in his own mind, to blame the precipitancy of his journey to Poitiers, by which he had lost four days, far from the city in which she was probably still concealed; nevertheless the interest Andrew seemed to feel in his affairs, the sincere contrition he evinced, the marks of grief and anxiety he bore on his countenance, made a deep impression on his heart. He interrogated the priest respecting the change he appeared to have undergone in opinions and principles. Andrew replied with noble frankness. Educated in a convent, knowing men only by the perusal of monkish volumes, contemplating politics as far only as they related to the triumph of religion, he had ever placed implicit faith in his ecclesiastical superiors. Never had the shadow of a doubt crossed his mind re-

specting either the truth of their words, the propriety of their orders, or the authenticity of the miracles they attested. Endowed with good sense, with long-tried prudence, and with undaunted courage, Andrew had recommended himself to the notice of the bishop of Tours; he had been employed by him in various perilous missions, in which he had always acquitted himself with success. He had visited the camps of nearly all the barbarian tribes, ransoming captives, recovering the stolen relics of saints, and preaching the gospel. The rectitude of his character had every where gained him respect: he had been honoured even by those he could not persuade; and so firmly did he believe the word he preached, that they who were not convinced by his arguments were often attracted by their confidence in the faith of so upright a man.

When, on the news of the approaching marriage of Clovis, Volusianus, combining with St. Remy, resolved on arresting the bride, who had spread so much terror among the clergy, he chose father Andrew for the expedition. The prelate wanted some man endowed with a strong mind, capable of acting alone, and shifting his plans according to circumstances; a man of courage, who would pass a night or even se-

veral successive ones, in caves where the timid herd of monks would never have dared to descend; a man who would fearlessly associate with the fugitive bagaudæ, Volusianus was obliged to employ, they being the only persons acquainted with the Celtic ruins; who, by the superiority of his character, might gain such empire over them as to ensure their fidelity in the execution of the undertaking. Volusianus wanted also the assistance of some virtuous man, who, charged with the seizure of a damsel of extraordinary beauty, would remain proof against temptation, against all thoughts injurious to the honour of her who was about to be left defenceless in his power. Although Volusianus was sacrificing Julia to the general good of the church, he would have shuddered at the idea of exposing her virtue to the slightest stain. It must also be remarked that the interest of the priesthood imposed upon him the duty of guarding his victim's chastity. The public more willingly forgives crafty and cruel deeds in priests, than immoral actions. To them it is less dangerous to be convicted of causing women and children to perish by fire, than to be suspected of attempts against female chastity.

Very few priests possessed the various qualifications Volusianus wanted to find united, for

the mission in which he employed father Andrew. In choosing, therefore, that ecclesiastic, he combated his first scruples; nay, in order to destroy them, he carried his condescension so far as to lay before him all his correspondence with St. Remy, and all the knowledge they had both gained respecting the character and schemes of Severus. Father Andrew was astonished: this was the first time he had received from his superior orders directly contrary to the dictates of his conscience. He hesitated, and Volusianus probably perceived it. Urged, however, by a habit of respect and confidence, by a deep sense of humility, and the belief he never could err so long as he obeyed him who had the right of commanding, he promised to execute the orders; and when once he had undertaken the commission, he conscientiously performed what he thought his duty.

His surprise was great when, descending the Loire, he was convinced that Volusianus had given him false information; that Julia Severa was a Christian, that she fostered no dangerous project against the church; that far from desiring to become the chosen bride of Clovis, she dreaded that union, and that her heart was engaged to another. Andrew, when he became acquainted with the young people confided to

his care, could not refrain from feeling some interest for them. He was affected by the pardon they so willingly granted to him; and immediately afterwards he began to doubt whether he ought to forgive himself: instantly he went to Volusianus, less with the intent of giving him an account of his success than to inform him of the new circumstances he had just learnt. But he was utterly confounded at the apathy shewn by the prelate to circumstances which to him appeared so important; at his insensibility to the sufferings of the prisoners, and the agonizing torture to which their parents were exposed; he was confounded at his repeated prohibition, accompanied with threats, from giving Sylvia any information respecting the fate of her son; at his cold-hearted resolution of closing for ever the light of day on the two prisoners, and of suffering them to pine and perish in a dungeon, should they not consent to bind themselves by irrevocable vows; this Volusianus was determined on doing, rather than incur the risk of Clovis's being alienated from the church, by a detection of his schemes.—Clovis now about to become his protector. Andrew, however, heedless of his threats, had transmitted Felix's letter to Sylvia. This was the first time in all his life he had disobeyed his bishop; the first time he had ever pre-

ferred the light of reason to what he had been taught to regard as the duties of his profession; the first time, when feeling a weight on his conscience, he had dispensed with the obligation of immediately confessing it to his ecclesiastical superior. This first act of disobedience was followed by many others; the bonds which hitherto had restrained his life were now broken, although he was unable to enjoy his liberty.

After Andrew had parted from Julia Severa in the court of the cathedral, he had had no communication with her, and had found it impossible to discover what was become of her. He presumed, however, that she had remained in the convent of St. Martin, until Volusianus received intelligence of the expedition undertaken by Theodoric for her deliverance. He thought it highly probable the prelate then caused her to be removed; she had perhaps been sent to another convent. But as yet nunneries were not very numerous in Gaul: those situated in other dioceses were not subject to the immediate authority of Volusianus, and Andrew did not think the bishop would trust to the guard of any other person, a prisoner whose deliverance would have endangered his honour: the priest concluded, therefore, that it would be proper to seek for her, either in the small con-

gregations formed in the diocese of Tours, but which had not yet arisen to the rank of convents, or in some one of the castles belonging to the church.

The fate of Felix had not been veiled in such deep mystery. Andrew soon learnt that he had been introduced into the convent of St. Martin as a demoniac, and there subjected to various exercises preparatory to the expulsion of evil spirits; that his arrival had been represented as miraculous, and attributed to the efficacy of prayer and intercession, although the deed had in reality been effected by violent means, under the direction of himself. This was the first time the tales of wonder, by which the piety of the faithful was fostered, had, in his mind, been convicted of falsehood. With a heart too upright, a soul too open, to conceive the existence of these pious frauds, to which in those days so many distinguished personages of the church scrupled not to descend, he had ever believed religion and truth to be one and the same; and by suffering others to attribute to him miraculous powers which he knew he did not possess, he thought himself a sharer in the abominable guilt of sacrilege. This discovery had filled him with terrific doubts; all his faith was now shaken, and as mere

doubt was in his eyes a mortal sin, sorrow and despair had succeeded to that consolatory piety which until now had animated his bosom. He no longer found any certainty in his feelings or his religion; morals and faith instead of supporting each other, to him appeared opposed; his deeds and thoughts became subjects of remorse; the perturbation of his soul had destroyed his health, and the change in his appearance which had so forcibly struck Felix, he attributed to the iron hand of sorrow and repentance.

Father Andrew had again approached Volusianus, and called on him to contradict a fable, the spreading of which was a gross impiety. But the prelate replied that it was not proper to shake the faith of the weak-minded, by leading them to doubt the miracles of religion; that it was more wise to profit by a belief, which, although it had not truth for its basis, served to support it; that they ought not to reproach themselves for a deception which gained souls to the Almighty, and which Satan alone could complain of; that before all things it was their duty to promote the interest of God and his church, without heeding the means that might conduce thereto. These motives had appeared to Andrew tainted by considerations of worldly

politics, of which, until now he never durst suspect his superiors guilty. He had insisted on his admonition being attended to; but Volusianus then assuming another tone, ordered him instantly to depart with secrecy to Poitiers, and not to leave it until recalled.

"At length I obeyed," said he, "but my "obedience was a second fault. Reflection and "solitude have taught me to distinguish my "duty more clearly. I know the truth, it be-"hoves me to proclaim it, and cause it to "triumph. I have been guilty of a heinous crime "against Julia Severa and yourself, of which "I owe to God and the world a public confes-"sion. Already should I have returned to "Tours to make that confession and seal it "with my blood; for full well do I see what "would have been the consequence; but the "bishop of Poitiers retains me here, as it were "a prisoner. If you have sufficient interest, de-"liver me from these bonds, and God, who hath "accepted my repentance, will also vouchsafe "the grace of a thorough reparation. I it "was who took from you the chosen bride of "your heart; I it was who deprived Julius Se-"verus of a beloved daughter—I now will endea-"vour to restore her to you."

CHAP. VII.

THE PEASANTS.

" Have they not behaved in such a manner that men ex-
" posed to the knavery of judges, to torment, and to death,
" have turned barbarians because they were no longer al-
" lowed to remain Romans? They had completely lost their
" liberties, and now are they forced to defend their lives.
" What is done now more than before? Are not they who
" are still innocent compelled to become bagaudæ?"

Salviani de Gubernatione Dei, lib. v. *p.* 104.

FELIX, in his turn, had related to father Andrew the manner in which he had recovered his liberty, and the new protectors he had gained in the Franks, now quartered at Tours. He described to him the obstinacy with which Volusianus, contemning the evidence of his hearers and of common sense, asserted that he had not shared in the seizure at Hesodunum; that Felix had been placed in his hands by supernatural means; that Julia had disappeared: he informed him how Volusianus had deceived the

rabble, who now firmly believed in a miracle, attested, as it were, in their presence.

Andrew, leaning his head on his bosom, pondered on these strange circumstances, and meditated the means of combatting the testimony of a prelate so highly venerated, supported by the power of the clergy, and backed by the credulous fanaticism of the multitude. "If we "can," said he, "secretly persuade Volusianus "to abandon his error, and induce him by the "fear of infamy, to restore Julia to liberty, cha-"rity and prudence impose it as a duty upon us. "He knows me well. He is aware that no fear "will ever cause me to stray from the direct "path; he knows that I have some influence "over the multitude he has seduced, and that "the fable he has just circulated has increased "my reputation. Let us hope he will avoid a "struggle which must end in his disgrace; let "us hope he will accept the conditions you may "propose; but should he refuse, then will I as-"cend the pulpit in the presence of the deluded "people—I will give proofs that he has de-"ceived them by a wicked imposture. Truth "is more powerful than falsehood; I will re-"peat his own words; I will speak of the letters "he communicated to me, the agents he em-"ployed, those to whom I myself transmitted

"his orders; those to whom, on my return, I "delivered you both; I will publish what un-"willingly I learnt respecting the spies who "formerly surrounded you; for even at the "time I approved the object proposed to me, "I could not refrain from loathing their treach-"erous and cowardly actions, disgracing the "sacred character with which they were in-"vested."

These last words excited a feeling of profound grief in Felix. "Is it possible," he exclaimed, "that Martin who educated me; that Martin "on whom we have showered benefactions——"

"I believe, at least I am willing to believe, "not only that he had not formed any evil design "against you, but that he was not aware of the "use that would be made against Julia by his "discoveries. But I am certain that by his "means all the actions and projects of your "mother were known at the cathedral; and "that the bishop was informed of the intended "excursion to Hesodunum a long time before "it took place; that Martin even contrived to "have it deferred until we were ready. I know, "also, that he suggested some other plan of "seizure, which failed, and in which I had no "share. He was not able to bear the idea of "seeing you again; he has quitted Noviliacum,

" where you will meet him no more, as he has
" been rewarded for his services with a rich be-
" nefice. I was thinking of the shameful per-
" fidy of such spies when at the entrance of the
" convent, I warned you against confiding in
" those who surrounded you; but it appears
" that Volusianus had no longer need of learn-
" ing your secret thoughts."

The firmness of father Andrew, his unshaken resolution of making amends for the evil he had caused, revived the hopes of Felix. Were Julia still living, he thought himself certain of being able to burst the doors of her prison; but was it not too late? He durst not communicate all his fears; but Andrew understood him: his countenance darkened, his eyes were suffused with tears, but he refused not to answer.

" Perhaps," said he, " Volusianus desires the
" death of his captive; it is possible he may ex-
" pose her, without remorse, to sufferings which,
" if prolonged, would probably endanger her
" life; but never will he order an assassination;
" and I think, nay, I can venture to affirm, that
" he would be equally reluctant to order a
" public execution. One hundred and ten
" years have passed since the first blood was
" shed in Gaul under pretence of punishing
" errors in faith: then indeed a matron of Bor-

" deaux was put to death for swerving from or-
" thodoxy; but the glorious predecessor of Vo-
" lusianus, St. Martin himself, proclaimed his
" horror at the cruel deed. That noble exam-
" ple Volusianus will not forget: yet do I shud-
" der at the thought of the snares with which
" Julia will be beset, and of the horrid punish-
" ments they will think themselves authorized
" to inflict on her, should her faith not be found
" spotless. This fear sharpens the remorse
" which I feel for what I have already done."

Felix, petrified with horror, placed his hand on his brow and remained some time motionless, his heart torn with anguish. Andrew, who was not less grieved, thus continued, in order to divert his thoughts:—

" Now that you are here, it would perhaps be
" prudent to make some researches in the con-
" vents of Poitiers; although I do not think
" Julia has been brought so far. She is still at
" Tours, in one of the retreats dependent on
" the archbishop, or perhaps she remains con-
" cealed in some one of the small congregations
" which have been formed in that diocese. All
" the ruins, all the caverns, all the fastnesses,
" which during the days of persecution served
" as shelters for some pious recluses, and are
" now famed for the miracles performed by their

"relics, have been converted into sanctuaries, "adorned with chapels, and appropriated to the "church. All those holy spots I know; most of "their guardians put trust in me, nay, are wont "to obey the orders it was once my duty to de-"liver to them. Some of these, situate near our "route, will we visit ere we return to Tours: "God, who chasteneth us, but afterwards re-"sumeth his mercy, will, perhaps, grant that "before the set of to-morrow's sun, I may re-"store her whom I had no right to take from "you."

Revived by this hope, Felix resolved on not losing one moment in the prosecution of his inquiries. He presented himself before the Roman count, Gallus, and the Goth, Œgila, then commanding at Poitiers: he was received by them with the honours due to his rank. Œgila was an Arian, Gallus was more attentive to politics than to religion; both were decidedly opposed to the encroachments of the church, both watched with mistrust the bishop of Poitiers. They willingly gave the necessary orders for the restoration of father Andrew to full liberty, so that he might quit Poitiers and return to Tours. They also caused diligent search to be made in the convents and religious establishments of the dio-

cese, and assured Felix that Julia Severa had not been conveyed to their city.

Early the following morning, Felix Florentius and Andrew departed from Poitiers on horseback. Since the decline of the empire the highways were so much decayed that it was impossible to use a carriage. They were attended by Diocles, with two slaves and two sumpter mules to carry the luggage and provisions. In the large cities lodgings were to be obtained in a kind of inns, then called *diversoria;* but in the small towns and hamlets, travellers were obliged to provide every thing for themselves: yet hospitality was a rite rendered sacred by the law; and the traveller knocking at the gate of the cottage which appeared the most opulent, obliged the owner of the dwelling to assist him, and to give him shelter.

Thus the party arrived at the fall of the first day, at Iciodorum, or Iseurre upon the Creuse. This village, in which St. Bris had lately founded a church, was now inhabited by about a score of those families of peasants, called Fiscalins, as they belonged to the fiscal, and not to private owners. These were the property of the city of Tours, with the curia of which they divided the products of their agriculture. The peasant of

whom Felix demanded hospitality, besides the tillage of his fields carried on a little trade, so that by its exterior appearance, his house promised a more comfortable lodging than the others. The door was new; the cloth frames which closed the windows were untorn; a large heap of dung on one side of the door indicated the possession of much cattle, and a still greater heap of firewood on the opposite side shewed that the owner was prepared to face the inclemency of the winter. The size of the edifice was no proof of the condition of its inmates; Iseurre had been built for a population much more numerous than that which now inhabited it. The town erected on the slope, and constructed of stone, presented on the river side an appearance of opulence and regularity; the houses arose to the height of three or four stories, although, on the side towards the hill, the entrance was by the upper story; they were extensive and airy; but the greater part were deserted, and hardly were there twenty that contained any inhabitants.

Diocles knocked at the door of the cottage his master had fixed upon: he said to the peasant who answered the summons: "the Roman sena-
"tor, Felix Florentius, demands your hospitality
"for this night. He does not intend to exercise

"the rights he may claim by the laws of the "barbarians; he will give you no cause to re-"pent the opening of your doors."

The peasant, encouraged by this promise, called back his children, some of whom were busied in driving his cattle from the stalls, while others were concealing all the valuable articles contained in the kitchen, to which room the stranger was to be admitted. The Burgundian code, subsequently copied by the other barbarians, punished by a fine of six pieces of gold, the peasant who refused a lodging to the traveller, or who in the case of the stranger being of a distinguished rank, did not allow him to take from the stable a pig or a sheep for his supper, with fodder for his beasts of burthen. The poor man, however, thus obliged to offer an hospitality to the rich, far beyond his means, was seldom recompensed; nay, he was often robbed of his most valuable property by the slaves of his guests.

Felix did not travel in this manner; he lodged, it was true, under the roof of the peasant or yeoman, whose house promised the greatest convenience, for in those days such was the only means of obtaining any shelter; but he made amends for the trouble he occasioned by presents, and invited him, under whose roof he

passed the night, to share the supper prepared by his slaves. The general benevolence imprinted on his countenance, the interest he appeared to take in the welfare of the family, the caresses he gave to the children, soon brought him acquainted with all the inmates of the household in which he was obliged to remain for a short time; and the hospitality he obtained under the sanction of the law, was to him a bond of affection and confidence.

Father Andrew knew, at Iseurre, a holy virgin, who had consecrated the whole of her small patrimony to God and the poor: not being rich enough to found a convent, she took for the companions of her prayers, two or three young devout virgins, with whom she divided her small income. Her house, situate some distance from the village, was, according to common report, sanctified by the residence of some persecuted Christians in the days of paganism. Andrew thought it possible Julia Severa might be confided to the care of this religious lady: but when he asked tidings of her, he was informed the bagaudæ had ransacked her house, and led her into captivity, and for some weeks past no intelligence respecting her had been received.

"Have you, then," said Felix, "any wandering bagaudæ in this neighbourhood?"

"Indeed have we," replied the peasant, "on "all sides they surround us: not a day passes "but some ancient family of industrious hus- "bandmen quit their cottage, their fields and "their teams, to retire to the woods, there to "live by plunder."

"Is it possible?" replied Felix, "that men "who have enjoyed the protection of the laws, "that men who have tasted the sweets of ci- "vilized life, can willingly return to the savage "state of barbarism; can abandon their houses, "their property, their comforts,—for what— "to wage war against mankind?"

"Senator, when you speak of laws protecting "us, surely you must be unacquainted with the "state of the peasants in Gaul! Where are the "sweets we can taste—where the comforts we "can enjoy;—where the property we can call "our own?"

"Why—this house, in which you now re- "ceive me, shelters you from the inclemency of "the weather."

"House, indeed—senator, this house exposes "me to more uneasiness than would a hut of "clay roofed with leaves. It is the best in the vil- "lage, and for that very reason here do all your "counts, your revenue officers, your prelates, "your soldiers, come to lodge. To be sure, it

" is mine, as long as it does not suit the purpose
" of any one more powerful than myself; but
" how often have I been thrust out with my
" wife and children, to seek shelter where I
" could, ay, and even when the ground was
" covered with snow!"

" At least you have some cattle in your stalls,
" corn in your barns, and wine in your bins;—
" such a man as you cannot possibly know what
" lack of food is."

" Senator, you did well not to add that I have
" money in my coffers. Now 'tis money that
" the fiscal and the count of Tours are ever de-
" manding of me. The crops you are talking
" about I must sell—I can't enjoy them: I must
" turn them into money, and money must I
" find, even when no one offers me any in ex-
" change. My teams can no longer be called
" my own; day after day must I toil with them,
" carrying my own crops to the public gra-
" naries, drawing away whatever the govern-
" ment chooses to fix on; or completing all
" kinds of public works. If my oxen or my
" horses sink with weariness, I and my sons
" are scourged by the orders of a barbarous
" steward. Society has for a long time been
" waging war against us, why then should not
" we, in our turn, wage war against society?"

"Your person at least is safe, while the ba-
"gaudæ, driven back to their forests, pursued
"from fastness to fastness, are killed like wild
"beasts in their lairs, or, if taken to the cities,
"are executed on the scaffold."

"Said you that my person was safe! Pray
"who defends me against the soldiers? Who
"defends me against the barbarians? Who
"defends me against the robbers? The peasant
"of Gaul enjoys not one moment of security, not
"one moment of comfort, not one moment of
"happiness. See what our race is come to;
"see how the villages are now deserted. My
"great grandfather was wont to tell my father
"that here he had seen five hundred hearths,
"and my father used to complain of the hard-
"ness of his times, because a hundred only
"were left. Now, forsooth, hardly can we count
"a score;—little did my father think, poor
"man, that one of his sons would become a
"bagauda, and the other be ready to follow his
"example?"

"Have you then a brother with the ba-
"gaudæ?"

"Poor fellow; he was not made for such a life;
"but the excess of wretchedness wearied his
"patience. His house stood the third on the
"left-hand as you go hence; it was a goodly

"house, well built, and larger than this: now "alas! 'tis deserted; the fields he tilled lie "fallow. The fiscal agents seized his crops, "carried off his cattle, sold all his valuables, "heedless of the losses my poor brother had "sustained in the hard service of the govern-"ment. One of his sons fell sick, and died in "want and misery. No sooner had Procer "Nunnianus closed the eyes of his child, than, "maddened with grief, he rushed to the forest "with his wife and the remainder of his family. "The fiscal ruined him.—Well, the fiscal is "not the richer for it;—there is one honest "man the less in Iseurre."

Father Andrew had listened without interrupting the peasant, to whom they were indebted for a lodging; but now he spoke to encourage, to console, to appease his host: this he did with a devotion, a feeling, a pity for the poor, and such a confidence in the promised rewards of another life, that Felix was as much surprised and affected as he to whom the discourse was directly addressed. The peasant's picture of the woes of his country had increased his melancholy, and added to the despondency caused by his own misfortunes. Could he expect to find happiness himself, when so many

were unfortunate; when neither prudence, nor probity, nor industry, could shelter from misery? What guarantee could he find in his own heart against the fear of losing Julia for ever—against the dreadful idea that she might now be pining in a dungeon? Father Andrew's confidence in the protection of divine providence revived his courage. His present woes were not lessened; the probability was still the same that all his hopes would be balked; but the good priest, instead of suffering the thoughts of Felix to be fixed on the present moment, had directed them to a more distant point: he had reminded him, in a forcible manner, that other hopes may begin where those of the world end; at the same time he appeared so deeply affected with compassion for the trials of this life, so firmly convinced of future and endless bliss, that he made his hearers share his sentiments: he first attempered his mind to theirs, and then raised them, with himself, above the earth.

"Good father," observed the peasant, "it "shall not be said you have spoken in vain. "Never will Nunnianus join the bagaudæ: he "will bow in patience before the miseries of "this life, thinking of what awaits him in the "next. In the exchange for the good you

"have done me, I should wish to render you "some service; but here in my house, sur-"rounded by my neighbours, in the midst of "that society which the senator is pleased to "call civilized, I can neither defend myself, "nor become useful to a friend or a guest. "My brother in the woods, unsheltered by any "roof, possessing no barns, no flocks, no pro-"perty, although an outlaw, is much more "powerful than I. Should you ever fall into "his hands, mention the name of Nunnianus, "shew him this piece of our father's cloak; he "will know it, and perhaps his hospitality may "be more useful to you than mine." Saying these words the peasant tore from an old mantle of coarse stuff, woven with various colours, a shred, which he gave to father Andrew. The priest, without setting much value on this recommendatory symbol, received it with an expression of gratitude, and secured it in his purse.

Meanwhile beds of moss and fern were spread, by the daughters of Nunnianus, in the four corners of the hall, where the strangers had supped: on these they reposed, while the peasant retired with his family to the stables and store-rooms, which occupied the remainder of the house.

The following day our travellers resumed their journey, Felix leaving a present in Nunnianus's hands, which excited his gratitude almost as much as the consolatory exhortations of father Andrew.

The intention of this latter was to visit at Loches the sanctuary of St. Senoch, who, a few years since, had retired there to live in penance. Loches was indeed situate at some distance from the direct road; but St. Senoch, having constructed a hermitage amid the ruins of an ancient tower upon the Indre, many pious persons flocked around him, hastening to learn, under his direction, the path to salvation. Thus, at a later period, was formed the convent of Loches; but at this time the penitents of both sexes were under no common rules. Among the females whom Senoch directed, and who, although not absolutely nuns, lived entirely dependent on ecclesiastical authority, Andrew thought it not improbable he might find Julia Severa.

The priest added another reason for taking this route, a reason, which, in the mind of Felix, was not so important as in his own. "Of "human things," said he, "none are concealed "from the eyes of St. Senoch. He has re-"nounced the pomps and vanities of this world.

"His eyes are incessantly fixed on the light of "heaven; by that light he sees all that exists. "Never will he permit the bishop of Tours to "bring disgrace on the church; he will tell us "where the captive is concealed; he will restore "her to us."

Felix was inclined to venerate every one whose conduct excited the respect of so honest a man as father Andrew. The uprightness, however, of the priest's heart did not appear to be equalled by the rectitude of his judgment. He saw that the blind faith which induced him to believe all the information he had received, formed, at times, a singular contrast with the natural precision of his mind; he saw that Andrew, although undeceived respecting Volusianus, was not so with regard to any other of the ecclesiastical authorities; but that he believed all priests and saints possessed the same uprightness as himself; so that the ardour with which he attempted to compensate the injury he had committed, proceeded as much from his zeal for the honour of the clergy, disgraced by an unworthy brother, as from his repentance. When Felix, therefore, demanded some further particulars concerning St. Senoch, as they travelled towards Loches, he did not feel himself obliged to place implicit confidence in the

miraculous powers attributed to the hermit by his companion.

"St. Senoch," said father Andrew, "is of the "Taifali* nation; he belongs to that barbarous "horde, which, coming from the extremities of "Asia, and the confines of an empire said to "be as civilized as Rome, followed the Huns "through Scythia, traversed with them Ger-"many, scattering destruction in their way, "and finally established themselves in our "Aquitaine, between Poitiers and the sea. "Even at a distance you can distinguish the "deformed race of these Scythians of the "east, a race which cannot be confounded "with any of the inhabitants of Gaul: their "head is of extraordinary size, their eyes di-"minutive and hollow, their nose flat, and their "almost beardless chin, decked with a few thin

* [TAIFALI, Gallicani, gens Scythica, puerorum stupris infamis, in agro Galliæ Pictonico Sellensique, duce Ataulfo Gothorum rege aut ductu Goaris regis cum Alanis gente finitima, olim sedem fixit: *Teifali* Gregorio. Ab his Austrapius dux, apud Sellense castrum in Pictonibus episcopus ordinatus, interemptus est. Ex iisdem Senocus presbyter, clericus factus, in monasterio Turonico, multis virtutibus inclaruit, pauloque post Sigeberti regis cædem decessit. *Taifaliæ* vico nomen dedêre, in finibus Pictonum, inter Clichionem et Moritaniam, ad Separin fluv. apud Namnetas in Ligerim exeuntem, hodie *Tifauge*.—*Vide Hoffman sub voce.*]

"sandy hairs. Their species seems more al-
"lied to the brute than to man. You know
"they never dwell in houses; all confinement
"they hold in horror; dividing their lives be-
"tween the chase and their flocks, they value
"existence only as it affords them continual ac-
"tivity. As much strangers to pity as if they
"belonged not to our nature—insensible to
"any tender affections, they have polluted
"their marches with the most direful cruelties.
"Their manners are as disgusting as their mode
"of life is ferocious. From this race, however,
"hated by the rest of mankind, St. Senoch
"hath been called. He has not only renounced
"the pleasure of shedding blood, and the other
"crimes of his countrymen, but has also de-
"prived himself of the freedom they hold so
"dear; he has sacrificed even the liberty en-
"joyed by the most miserable among the inha-
"bitants of the earth; that liberty which the
"most severe rules have never denied the most
"rigid monks; that liberty, which even tyranny
"hath granted to the victims buried in her dun-
"geons. He has chosen in the ruins of the
"tower of Loches, a space scarcely sufficient to
"hold his own body. There he has walled
"himself in a position which renders it im-
"possible for him to sit, to lie, to stoop, or

" touch any part of his frame with his hands.
" Immured for ever in a case of stone, whence
" he cannot escape, he remains motionless and
" defenceless, in absolute dependence, not only
" on the human beings, who, from charita-
" ble motives bring him his food, which they
" are obliged to put into his mouth; but even
" on the insect that lights on his face, and which
" he cannot remove, or the reptile which creeps
" between his body and the stone, or the rat
" which at times attempts to gnaw his feet——"

At this instant the relation of father Andrew was interrupted by the cry—stop,—which suddenly was heard around them, proceeding from the middle of the forest. Felix turned his eyes towards Diocles to inquire what was meant by this shout. The veteran, without evincing the least alarm, coolly replied, in one word—the bagaudæ!

CHAP. VIII.

THE AMBUSH.

" During this period a great number of travellers in Gaul " became victims of the enraged banditti. These formed " ambuscades on the largest and most frequented roads, and " took off all who could pay a ransom. The tribune Con- " stantianus, nearly related to the emperor Valentinian, and " Cerealis, brother of the empress, fell into their snares."

Ammiani Marcellini, lib. xxviii. *cap.* 2.

THE travellers were now within two leagues of the banks of the Indre. The country they were crossing was mountainous, covered with trees and brushwood, and intersected by streamlets, some of which flowed towards the Creuse, others towards the Indre. They were following, amid these wilds, a difficult and winding path, nearly destroyed by the autumnal rains. This path, at times, commanded an extensive view of the adjacent country; oftener, particularly on the slope of the hills, or in the neighbourhood of the rivers, it was dug deep, to diminish the de-

clivity of the soil, or to avoid its inequalities; in these places the bottom was covered with slippery pebbles, like the dry bed of a torrent, while on the right and left arose perpendicular banks of earth, the edges of which were overhung with broom, brambles, and thorny shrubs.

In the vicinity of one of these small rivers, and on the slope of a hill, the travellers were stopped: behind them the declivity was covered with a forest of aged oaks; in the bottom of the valley before them flowed a river at the distance of about six furlongs,—but which they were unable to see, being in a hollow of the road. In this place the path was not more than eight feet broad, and the two upright banks of sandy, sterile earth, rising on both sides, and covered with bushes, concealed every other object from their view, and enclosed them, as it were, between two lofty walls.

A tree, with all its branches, had been thrown by the bagaudæ into the hollow which the travellers were to pass: this was intended to stop them in the most advantageous position for attack. The outlaws, however, did not conceal themselves behind this rampart, but remained on the banks of the ravine, beyond the reach of blows. At times they shewed their menacing countenances above the bushes, as if to

reconnoitre the ground, immediately after which they hurled a volley of stones; they were visible for a moment only, but made the forest ring with their threats, and the shouts of stop! surrender!

This mode of attack proved that the bagaudæ lacked either arms or courage. It was impossible to approach them so as to fight hand to hand. They kept aloof, shewing themselves occasionally, and apparently more inclined to alarm than to injure. Among the heads which now and then peeped above the brushwood were seen as many women as men; nay, in their threatening shouts, the voices of children could easily be distinguished. The bagaudæ appeared to be running on the banks, shouting now in the van, then in the rear of the travellers, wishing, seemingly, by these manœuvres to make their strength appear greater than it really was. They flung many stones without aim; all which fell either before or behind the spot where the travellers stood, and no one had yet been wounded. They continued for several minutes in this threatening attitude, without coming to close combat.

The state of anarchy in which Gaul was now placed did not permit the Romans to travel unarmed, as was the custom of their ancestors.

Suspended to their saddles, Felix and Diocles had each a bow of the same form as that used by the Alani; they wore also a well-tempered Roman sword, with poniards in their girdles. The two slaves were armed with battleaxes, fastened to the burthens of their sumpter-mules. Andrew was the only one of the party who had no other arms than his staff.

After rapidly reconnoitring the obstacle which stopped them, and the strength and position of the assailants, Diocles exclaimed: "It were "shameful cowardice to surrender to such "rabble: forwards! let us instantly charge "them."

The veteran grasped his bow; Felix did the same, intending to keep those at a distance, who, by their position commanded the path, while the slaves with their axes endeavoured to remove the tree.

"Stop," exclaimed father Andrew, "it shall "not be said that for a few wretched pieces of "gold, we snatch away the lives of our fellow-"creatures, or that we ourselves rush headlong "to the judgment-seat of God.—What do you "ask of us?" said he to the bagaudæ, advancing alone and unarmed to the tree which barred their passage, at the same time making signs to his companions not to follow him.

A woman, removing with a battleaxe the brushwood which overhung the path, now advanced to the edge of the bank. Her stature was lofty, she appeared to be about fifty years of age: her dishevelled hair, hanging from beneath a cap of fur, her naked arms, her shoulders wrapt in an unshorn sheepskin, her short tunic, suited either for a man or a woman, gave to her a wild and terrific appearance; the harshness of her features, the commanding firmness of her voice, increased this first impression. "Surrender," said she to Andrew, "what needs "any further parley?"

"Woman," replied the priest with firmness, "we will not surrender; we want neither the "power nor the courage to defend our persons; "but for a few paltry pieces of gold, I should "wish to avoid shedding either the blood of "thee or of ourselves. Say, what dost thou ask "to leave the pass free to us?"

"We shall know how to defend ourselves," replied the female, "be thy blood on thy head "if thou compel us to shed it. Again I say, "surrender."

"Woman," resumed Andrew," thou carriest "on a trade hateful to God and to man; expose "not thyself by provoking a combat, to be "dragged sooner than thou wouldest wish be-

"fore the judgment-seat of the Highest, where "thou wilt have to render an account of thy "actions."

"Priest," replied the woman impatiently, "keep thy sermons for other hearers, not for "bagaudæ; go warn thy companions that all "resistance is useless. Until now have I spared "thy life, although, as thou seest, it is in my "hands, for thy life must answer for that of my "husband who was yesterday taken to the prison "of Bourges. Judge now whether I can con-"sent to receive a ransom: 'tis your bodies I "want, not your gold—once more, I say, sur-"render, for the patience of a bagauda is soon "wearied."

Father Andrew now returned to Felix and reported what had passed. "Julia Severa is a "captive," replied Felix, "perhaps groan-"ing in a dungeon and awaiting her deliver-"ance from me; never was liberty more ne-"cessary—no—I will not surrender."

At the same time Felix and Diocles strung their bows, and the arrows whistled over the head of the woman as she retired behind the brushwood. Holding themselves in readiness to shoot the first bagauda who might appear on either bank, they ordered the two slaves to advance with their hatchets, and to clear the pass.

At that moment the bagaudæ, uttering horrid yells, poured a shower of stones into the pathway. The slaves threw down their hatchets, and crouched to the earth: from that moment it was found impossible to make use of them. Father Andrew, leaping from his horse, seized one of the hatchets, and boldly advanced to the obstruction: Felix followed his example, and Diocles, meanwhile, with a skill and activity which could not have been equalled by his companions, shot his arrows among the brushwood with such precision, in the direction whence proceeded the stones, that a groan, following each discharge, made known that he had wounded some one of his unseen adversaries.

Father Andrew and Felix, in spite of a shower of stones, continued their endeavours to clear the pass. Their hatchets had already lopped off several of the large branches of the tree which lay athwart the road, and they began to see an opening by which the horses might clear the obstacle; when those animals, frightened by the yells, and struck by stones, began to snort and plunge, and became unmanageable. Diocles could with difficulty hold them as he continued fighting. The bagaudæ, seeing their prey on the point of escaping, advanced with less caution: being nearer to the travellers they flung

heavier stones, and took surer aim. One struck father Andrew on the right arm, and caused him to drop the hatchet: he said not a word, but stooping, picked it up with his left hand, with which he continued labouring, while the right arm hung powerless by his side. Another stone, still more heavy, struck Felix on the neck; as he was bending down to remove a branch which he had already severed; the blow stretched him senseless on the ground. The bagaudæ, now cheering each other with shouts of victory, united their efforts against Diocles, and hit him with several stones, hurled with such violence, that he dropt from his horse. The animal squeezed up in a narrow space, pressed by the horses of Felix and Andrew and the mules, terrified, wounded, and foaming with rage, rushed instantly, with the swiftness of an arrow, to the obstacle which was now partly removed: he cleared it at a leap; but at the same time threw down father Andrew, who, deprived of the use of his right arm, could not defend himself. The two other steeds also passed over him; but one of the mules, endeavouring to follow the horses, failed in the attempt to clear the tree, and fell back on the unfortunate priest.

All the travellers were now down, and the bagaudæ leaping from every side into the hol-

low, fell upon them in order to get possession of their arms, and to prevent their rising. Victory was no longer doubtful. Felix, who had not yet recovered his senses, was partly dragged, and partly carried, by two bagaudæ, who seized and bound him ere he was capable of resistance. Diocles, having received many contusions, was also overpowered and bound; but Andrew, whom the bagaudæ endeavoured to assist in rising from the ground, was incapable of motion. Not only had his arm been broken by a stone, but his thigh also was fractured by the fall of the mule laden with the baggage; his chest was dreadfully crushed, and a discharge of black blood from his mouth, as soon as he attempted to rise, proved that the organs of life were injured.

"This fellow," said a bagauda, who endeavoured to raise him, "has not more than two "hours to live; we had better strip him at "once, and let him die here in peace."

"Bear him out of the hollow," said the woman, who seemed to have some authority over the others, and whom her companions called Armentaria, "let nothing in this place "draw the attention of passers by."

Two bagaudæ now took Andrew by his arms and legs, and carried him off with the pri-

soners; some seized the slaves and horses; while others picked up the arrows, and cautiously effaced all marks of the fight. The party then quitting the hollow a little lower down than the spot where the travellers were first stopped, plunged into the forest with their captives.

Felix was not aware of the state to which his travelling companion was reduced. When he came to his senses he found himself a prisoner in the forest, surrounded by men, some of whom held him closely, and threatened him with destruction. He advanced with downcast eyes, full of shame at having been conquered with such unequal arms, bewailing his fate, which, after a lapse of so few days, caused him to pass from one captivity to another, feeling the most bitter anguish at being deprived of liberty at the very moment when his activity was more than ever necessary to rescue Julia from the hands of her ravishers.

After advancing about five hundred paces, those who conducted Felix bade him stop. He raised his eyes and looked around. The hill, which the travellers were descending to reach the river when they were stopped, was very steep in this place. The bagaudæ had dragged him to a small terrace on the ascent from the river. Above, the naked rock, composed of

rolling stones, slightly united with sand, instead of forming a perpendicular cliff, presented a deep recess. The lower strata had yielded to the continued washing of the water and the ravages of time, while the upper remained untouched. Twenty or thirty men might easily find, under the shelving rock, shelter from the sun, rain, and wind. In the middle of the small terrace, on which they stood, arose two large wild cherry trees, beneath them grew abundance of brambles, clematis and hazels, which entirely concealed the road, and which, when seen from the opposite bank of the river, united their leaves to those of the bushes and shrubs which had taken root in the cliff above, and fringed the brow of the hill. Through the branches they could distinguish, and follow with the eye to a great distance, the course of the river, and the paths which encircled the neighbouring hills; these were in some parts seen ascending towards the summits of the mountains, in others they were concealed by the intervening woods. This position was well adapted for observation and retreat: the hill being more lofty than all others in the neighbourhood, the travellers, or the enemies who might approach, could be seen at the distance of twelve furlongs, while, at the same time, those who viewed them escaped ob-

servation. The steepness of the rock rendered it absolutely impossible to descend to this spot from the top of the hill, or to ascend from the river which rolled its waters five hundred feet lower down. The only mode of reaching it was by a narrow pathway which winded around the steeps: this road was also stopped by a kind of breach, across which the bagaudæ had thrown a plank. As soon as all the captives and their conquerors had passed, the plank was drawn back, and the party remained inclosed in their fastness.

The whole of Felix's attention was now fixed on father Andrew. The bagaudæ who had carried him, stretched the unfortunate priest on a bed of moss, under the rocky shelf. He was motionless. His eyes were shut, his mouth open, the paleness of death was spread over his cheek and brow, his garments were spotted with gore, his arm and thigh were bent at the places of fracture. Felix thought him dead. Nevertheless he intreated the two men who held him fast to permit him to approach his travelling companion, and if not too late, to render him some assistance.

"Wish you to assist him against death?" roughly replied one of the two bagaudæ, "his "sufferings are ended: think rather about your-"self; your turn will soon come."

Felix now turned his eyes towards the man who thus spoke. He had been wounded by Diocles, and the blood flowing from his side explained the cause of his anger. His rough, wild features were rendered still more terrific by his raiment. His long dishevelled hair and ragged beard had for a long time known neither the comb nor the razor. His head was uncovered, his legs and the nether parts of his body were clothed in the national garment of the Gauls, the *braccæ*, or breeches; but these were made with a coarse stuff, which appeared once to have served as the quilt of a bed; a sort of mantle of sheepskin hung from his shoulders, intended occasionally to cover his arms and his bosom, which by the least motion were rendered naked. In his hand he held a knotty club, to his girdle was fastened a large knife. He had no other weapons, and generally speaking all the party of bagaudæ into whose hands Felix had fallen, and which consisted of about fifteen men, as many women, and five or six children from ten to fifteen years old, were without any other arms than hatchets and knives.

Felix and Diocles were compelled to sit down: both had their hands tied behind their backs; they were made to lean one against the other, and by a cord passing round their bodies

they were fastened together. The bagaudæ took the precaution of securing the two slaves in the same manner, although the cowardice they had shewn during the combat had sufficiently proved that little was to be feared from them. They then began to heap up the plunder before Armentaria, the female who had first spoken to father Andrew, and who seemed to possess some power over her companions.

The baggage of the two mules was the first thing unpacked. One of those animals carried the clothes of Felix and Father Andrew, with a sort of travelling bed; the burthen of the other consisted of provisions and cooking utensils. This plunder excited the joy of the robbers. One wrapt himself in the toga of Felix, another in the cassock of father Andrew: a third, covering himself with a blanket, declared with an oath that it was high time the men of the woods should have better beds than those in the towns; that Felix would do well to send them all beds equally comfortable, and that he might in exchange, take to his gilded mansions the straw and moss with which they were obliged to be content in the forest. The women had already unloaded the mule which carried the kitchen utensils; they questioned the slaves respecting the use of those small articles which seemed well

adapted for their wandering mode of living, and for the completion of a kitchen they had formed in a corner of the rock. The wine-skin, borne by the same mule, passed from mouth to mouth; when drained of its contents, it was placed at the feet of Armentaria.

The bagaudæ next rummaged the pockets of the travellers, their joy was excessive when they pulled from that of Felix a purse well lined with gold. That of father Andrew was much lighter; nevertheless they opened it, and drew forth a shred of coarse stuff. "What is this rag?" said one of them, shewing it to Felix.

"That is a symbol given to us by our host "at Iseurre: he recommended us to present it "to the bagaudæ, should we meet with any on "the road."

"What is the name of the host you are speak-"ing of?"

"Nunnianus."

"Armentaria," said the bagauda to the female who headed the party, "this man had a token "from your husband's brother."

Armentaria examined it carefully. "By my "troth," said she, "it is a piece of his father's "mantle; such tokens I have known Procer re-"ceive more than once. Traveller, why did "you not show it sooner? You would have

"spared the shedding of much blood, and he "who lies yonder on the moss would still have "been alive."

"You neither allowed us time for speaking "to, nor coming near you."

"All is well," replied Armentaria, "what is "was to be. Had my husband been free, he "would have left you free also; but he is in "shackles, I must have some pledge in order to "recover him. Had you, instead of a token "from Nunnianus, brought me one from the "Almighty himself, I would have made you my "prisoner."

"In respect, at least, for the recommendation "of Nunnianus, let me approach my unfortu-"nate friend, to whom the token was given, "and endeavour, if possible, to render him "some assistance. Take away these bonds, "and I will pledge myself by oath not to abuse "your confidence by seeking to regain my li-"berty."

Armentaria took up from among the heap of baggage before her, a book which she thought must be the gospels, but which, in truth, was a Horace, and presenting it to the two captives, she made them swear they would not take advantage of their freedom, and escape. After which she made a sign to a bagauda to loose them.

Diocles, who, until now, had been sullenly silent, as soon as he felt his hands free, maddened with rage, seized a stick lying by his side, broke it, and flung the pieces on the ground. He measured with his eyes the unarmed rabble which had conquered him; he beat his cheeks with his fists; at length making a violent effort to restrain his feelings, he resumed his wonted firmness and composure; he approached the corse of father Andrew, without having yet said one word. He examined him attentively; then, turning to Felix, said; "He still breathes."

CHAP. IX.

THE BAGAUDÆ.

"Now will I speak of the bagaudæ; of those who have "been stript, tormented, put to death, by cruel and san-"guinary judges; who, after having been deprived of their "rights as citizens of Rome, have lost the very name of "Romans.—We call them rebels, we call them ruffians, "when we ourselves were the cause of their becoming "criminals; for what forced them to turn bagaudæ? Was "it not our iniquities, the corruption of our magistrates, "their proscriptions, their rapacity, and the scandalous "seizure of the public revenues and the produce of the "imposts, which they took to themselves as their own?"

Salvianus de Gubernatione Dei, lib. v. *p.* 104.

FELIX sat by the side of father Andrew; he placed his head on his knees and rubbed his temples; having procured from Armentaria a small bottle of vinegar which formed part of his baggage, he made him smell to it, and also poured a few drops down his throat. The respiration of Andrew at length became less

difficult; he opened his eyes and viewed with astonishment the wild countenances of the bagaudæ; he then looked on Felix and Diocles, one of whom supported his head, while the other held his hands. He tried to move and to place his fractured arm and thigh in a less uneasy position, but not being able to do this, he again closed his eyes, and his brow was bathed in a cold and clammy perspiration.

His vain attempts to move attracted the attention of Felix and Diocles to his fractured limbs; after examining them, after feeling his wounded breast and broken ribs, Diocles made a sign to Felix that all hope had vanished; that all they could do for the unhappy patient was to leave him in that state of repose nature had granted to him, and not to increase or prolong his sufferings by the application of unavailing lenients.

Father Andrew now seemed again to revive: his lips moved as if attempting to speak. His words soon became intelligible, and Felix observed he was repeating the prayers for the dying: he then appeared anxious to receive the viaticum; his wandering fingers seemed to be seeking for something. Unable to comprehend his meaning, they put various things into his hand, which he rejected. At length Felix gave

him a morsel of bread; Andrew broke it, and pronounced the words of consecration; after long and painful attempts, he carried it to his mouth and swallowed a small portion; his eyes remained shut. This last effort ended, his body once more became motionless; his breathing thickened, the rattling of death was heard in his throat: Diocles declared he was gone.

The eyes of Felix, filled with tears, remained fixed on father Andrew's face. After some time of anxious expectation, he thought he observed a change. The features of the dying man, until now distorted by pain, began to lose their rigidity; his jaws separated, his hollow cheeks resumed their former shape, his usual mildness beamed on his brow. At length his eyes opened, more clear, more calm than before.

"Felix, my son, art thou here?" said he, gently lifting up his head—then, recognising his friend, he continued: "my son, I have done "thee a great injury; thou hast already told me "that thou didst forgive me; do repeat the "word once more, that I may carry with me to "the grave the certainty of———"

"Yes, surely, with all my heart, with all my "soul I forgive you! When you injured me "you were in error; in the fulness of your

"judgment and feeling you were endeavouring
"to do me good."

"Thou dost then forgive me! Heaven grant
"that the poor, unhappy lady, the victim of my
"folly, may also pardon me!—In my turn also,
"I have forgiven, I now again forgive the only
"enemy I ever had, the man who stole from me
"the peace of a good conscience. I forgive Vo-
"lusianus, do thou, my son, forgive him also."

Felix was silent.

"Do, I beseech thee, forgive him, my son.
"Now thou art in sufferance thy forgiveness
"will be more acceptable to the Almighty, more
"worthy of the Christian."

"I do forgive him."

"Wilt thou labour to restore liberty to thy
"betrothed, but not to punish him who hath
"wrested her from thee: wilt thou, my son,
"ever respect the honour of the prelate, the
"honour of the church, although thou mayst
"oppose the abuse of power in the former?—
"When Julia shall be restored to her father, to
"thyself—for she will be so—let thy first thought
"be to make her truly and indeed a Christian,
"to make her prove that she is a Christian, by
"forgiving her persecutor."

"I will—I will."

"As for these poor people, urged by misery

"to commit crime, they felt no hatred against "me, they did not wish to hurt me; neither "have they hurt me; for they at least, have "not caused me to feel remorse; to forgive "them is not difficult. Stand by, good people," said he to the bagaudæ, "know that father An-"drew forgives you his death."

Armentaria approached, accompanied by a few bagaudæ, with countenances expressive of curiosity mingled with interest.

"My children," said he, raising his voice, "I forgive you, may you also obtain pardon in "heaven. May this act of violence, and those "you have before committed, be for ever can-"celled. Should the Almighty, filling the cup "of mercy to the brim, vouchsafe to move your "hearts—could the voice of a dying man reclaim "you from the fatal path on which you are now "treading, I would———I would promise you, "in the name of the senator Felix Florentius; "in the name of count Julius Severus——"

This exertion was too great for the sinking strength of Andrew, his ideas now began to be confused, his words were without connection, and no longer heard distinctly, his head sunk back on the moss-bed, his eyes closed again: still he spoke, or rather murmured. His lips continued to move, sometimes accompanied with

a slight sound: at length that motion ceased, the cold of death had seized his extremities, his limbs stiffened,—he was no more.

Felix had watched the last moments of his friend, his attention had been fixed on all his words and all his gestures, hoping to give him some relief: busied in this friendly office, since the first moment of their captivity, he had lived, as it were, for the present only; his thoughts strayed neither to the past nor the future; as long, therefore, as Andrew breathed, he remained unconscious of the horror of his situation; but as soon as he had heard his last groan, the most melancholy ideas rushed before his mind. Julia was a prisoner, concealed from all his researches; he who possessed the secret of her existence, he from whom alone he could expect the means of restoring her to freedom, was snatched away by death; he himself was a prisoner among robbers, unable to see any probable end of his captivity, while his friend and mother were anxiously expecting his return—a mother who had suffered so much during his first absence, a friend whose only hopes centred in him. His heart was not even free from remorse; he reproached himself with having accepted a challenge he was unable to sustain, and thus caused the death of father Andrew; he pon-

dered in his mind the affecting exhortations of the honest priest, the proofs he had given of patience, of courage, of kindness; and while his eyes remained fixed on the corse, tears trickled silently down his cheeks.

The bagaudæ for some time refrained from interrupting his grief. The dying agonies of father Andrew had lasted several hours, after which Felix stood long in silence, with folded hands, by the side of his departed friend. Meanwhile several of the robbers went out from the camp, and returned, sometimes bringing provisions, at others giving information to Armentaria. The day began to fall, and the bagaudæ gathering round a large fire, prepared their supper. A sheep had been brought by one of the party; the animal was instantly skinned and divided, some parts being thrown into their caldrons, others hung before the fire to roast; at the same time some round stones were thrown among the embers and made red hot, and then taken from the fire and covered with half dry chesnut leaves, over which they spread a liquid paste. They next formed a pile of these heated stones, and alternate layers of dough. This sort of oven served to bake their unleavened cakes, on which, when dressed, were still seen the marks of the leaves.

Their repast was nearly ready when Armen-

taria approached Felix: "You have given to "the dead the attention which his state de- "manded," said she to him, "think now of his "burial before you sit at the board of the "living. It behoves not bagaudæ long to remain "in one place, while so many blood-hounds "are seeking to tear them in pieces. We shall "therefore depart at midnight, and we do not "intend that this corse should remain to bear "witness against us. Go—lay it in the earth "by the river side."

Felix regretted that he could not perform over his friend the service for the dead, according to the rites of the church. He started some objections: but Armentaria's countenance, which had assumed a certain mildness when she addressed him, returned to its accustomed harshness. She impatiently replied by the single word "begone."

"We are prisoners," said Diocles, "our part "is to obey." At the same time he called the two slaves, who raised the body of father Andrew in their arms; he then said he was ready to follow the bagaudæ wherever they chose to conduct him. They took a rugged path, leading to the river, and penetrated amid the thicket to the bed of a mountain stream, now dry, where the sand and alluvion were

easily removed: with the assistance of the slaves, the bagaudæ opened a shallow grave, in which Felix and Diocles deposited their friend; and with tears in their eyes, bidding him a last farewell, they returned to the camp, where all was in readiness for the supper.

"Felix Florentius," said Armentaria to him when he returned, "your slaves have informed "me of your name and rank: I see I was not "mistaken when I imagined that the restoration "of my husband might depend on you. You "must remain with us as a hostage until he be "set at liberty. In our miserable situation we "cannot feed useless mouths, nor keep many "prisoners. I deplore the death of him who "rests yonder in his grave: were he still with "us I would give him his freedom, out of re-"spect for the recommendation of Nunnianus, "who has often assisted us in our distress. But "the will of him whom the priest served, is "more powerful than ours—of him, therefore, "no more. Let this soldier," said she, pointing to Diocles, "depart for Bourges; let him tell "the count of that town that unless within five "days my husband, Procer Nunnianus, be again "among us, I will cut your body into four "quarters, and cast your head at his gate. If "you have any zealous friends, send your two

"slaves to them, so that they may endeavour "to save you. I desire as much as yourself "they may succeed; but if they fail, by the "living God who now hears us, Armentaria "will execute her threat. Come now and sup "with us, you have need to refresh your strength, "for you will have a long march to make."

"Be not surprised," replied Felix, "if the "mournful duties I have just fulfilled towards "my friend, and the fate with which you "threaten me, have taken away the desire of "sharing your repast."

"We can eat, though," replied a bagauda, "yet to-morrow, perhaps, we shall all be cast "before the wild beasts, or tortured on the "scaffold."

"I will also eat," said Felix, "and bear my "fate, whatever it may be, as a man and a "Roman; but since my life depends on that of "your husband, and you allow him so short a "time to meet you, you should appoint a place "of rendezvous; you are about to depart with-"out informing Diocles of the direction in "which you are going to march."

"Surely you do not wish that I should tell "the count of Bourges where he may come and "slaughter us. It is sufficient for him to know "that we shall approach towards your estate.

" Let him set my husband free at your castle of " Rutilianus on the Cher; it will be his business " to find us out afterwards."

More than one chieftain of the bagaudæ had already been ransomed in this manner; Felix and Diocles had, therefore, but little doubt of the success of their negotiation, provided the latter could reach Bourges without any other accident, and before the fate of Procer Nunnianus was decided by his execution. The tablets of Felix were restored to him, and he wrote to the count of Bourges, to his mother, and to Julius Severus, pointing out what was necessary to be done for his safety. At the same time he took care to tranquillize his mother respecting his fate, and particularly instructed his slaves not to alarm her by their reports. After this he yielded to his destiny, and, sitting by the side of his new companions, in order to partake of their repast, he resolved to profit by his present situation, and observe mankind in a a state which to him was so novel.

The meal, however, offered but little worthy of observation. The bagaudæ were far from being an assembly of fiery and impetuous characters; such as, in the midst of their excesses, might be supposed to preserve some traces of a noble origin. They were, on the contrary,

nearly all peasants—slaves, whose energies were blunted by long toil and continued vassalage. They had bowed, for many years, to all kinds of humiliation and depression, so long as by such servility they could purchase a permission to exist; but excessive tyranny had at length driven them to seek a refuge in the woods. Their former toils and their present wandering life, had contributed to the agility of their bodies, and developed, in a certain degree, their talents for skill and cunning; but they had not yet found sufficient time to resume that courage and self-importance they had forgotten: the liberty of the woods had restored to them nothing of the dignity of human nature, so that Felix Florentius observed in their rude wildness, and in their base servility, the demeanour of rebel slaves towards their masters. Armentaria, however, appeared not to belong to the same class. Like Nunnianus, her brother-in-law, and Procer, her husband, she seemed to have gained by the excess of outrage, a feeling of the long violated rights of human nature. She did not, like her companions in misfortune, confine her thoughts to the state from which violence had driven her, she declared that in Gaul the condition of every man, who had to live on his in-

dustry, was as insupportable as the slavery of the fiscalin peasants.

"All," she said, "were equally exposed to "outrage, to hunger, to punishment. This "one," she continued, pointing out one of her companions to Felix, "after his house had been "burnt to the ground by the Burgundians, his "cattle slaughtered, his crops scattered before "the wind, was condemned to receive, each "day, fifty stripes, until his annual rent was "paid. He, standing yonder, was driven from "his cottage by a party of Roman soldiers, in "the midst of winter, and saw his wife, in the "pangs of child-birth, perish in the woods, "stretched upon a bed of ice and snow. This "one near me lost two children, who died of "hunger in the year when the most abundant "of harvests had just filled his granaries; but "his all was seized to pay the debts of the land-"lord whose farm he cultivated. Many among "my companions still bear on their bodies the "marks of punishment which they did not de-"serve; all, not excepting one, all would have "preferred to drag out their existence amid trou-"bles and sufferings, on the land which witnessed "their birth, rather than lead the miserable life "to which we are now reduced, had not

"whelming oppression driven them to the "forest. We have been exposed to two cen- "turies of war, but neither the sword of the "soldier and barbarian, nor the axe of the exe- "cutioner, nor hunger that pursueth us even to "our fastnesses, hath been able to lessen our "numbers. Thousands of us yearly perish on "your scaffolds, but yearly do thousands of "fugitives from your estates join our band: nay, "all the population of Gaul may, in the end, "perish in our forests."

The other guests took little or no share in the conversation: a circumstance which might probably be attributed to their mode of eating, which compelled them to separate into small groups. They were all sitting or lying under the rocky shelf, the food being spread on the ground between them; they appeared busied rather in satisfying the cravings of hunger, than gratifying the pleasures of the palate. In some of these groups were seen women and children eating as though they had long felt the want of nourishment; and the suspicion excited by their voraciousness was confirmed by their pallid meagreness. The meal with which they made their cakes constituted a part of their scanty provisions; the sheep had been seized, or, perhaps, received as a present from some

shepherd, a short time before Felix fell into the hands of the banditti. The wine-skin which was among his baggage, had been instantly emptied, and, during the supper, water was their only beverage; when, therefore, it was ended, they were neither more animated nor more heated than before they began. When they arose, they took care to destroy all traces of their meal and their encampment. They threw all that was useless down the cliff beneath them, and concealed in an excavation under the rock, which they afterwards covered with earth and dried leaves, all that might serve them another time, but which now would have encumbered their march. This was not done until the slaves and Diocles, who were shewn the shortest way to Tours and to Bourges, had departed and left their master alone amid the bagaudæ. Felix saw, with regret, the greatest part of his own luggage stowed in the hiding place.

The remnants of the fire disappeared, nothing now marked that men had been on the spot they were leaving.

"Let us begone," said Armentaria, "Felix "Florentius, it is as well you should bear in "mind that these two men are to answer for "your security; one will march before, the

" other behind you; I have given orders to both
" to plunge their knives into your breast should
" you remove one step from the path, or at-
" tempt to give an alarm. Silence, therefore,
" and march!"

This injunction was strictly observed during the whole journey. The horses and mules of Felix had not been brought to the terrace where he had passed the greater part of the day: he saw them no more, and consequently guessed that some of the robbers had undertaken to sell them at a distant mart. All the bagaudæ marched in file, at a distance of fifteen or twenty paces from each other, saving the two men who guarded Felix and never lost sight of him. As they were mostly unshod, or wore sandals of untanned hides, they made no noise in walking. The seizure of their leader two days before, and the troops who they knew were scouring the country to discover them, obliged them to act with double caution. They entered on no highway, but followed sometimes a path, the direction of which could with difficulty be traced, at others they advanced through the more open parts of the forest. They frequently passed houses near enough to see the lights and hear the barkings of the watch-dogs; they often stopped while the leader of the file listened,

although they still observed their usual silence; as soon as the leader advanced they followed. The night was nearly spent; but the moon illumined the country, and although on her decline, gave sufficient light to distinguish neighbouring objects with accuracy. Their march was long, being delayed by the precautions and frequent stoppages of the travellers; Felix at length saw before him a lofty ruinous tower, at the top of which glimmered a small light. Not far distant stood a considerable hamlet extending from the tower to the banks of a wide river. This was the end of their journey, and the bagaudæ, who until now had walked at a distance from each other, closed their ranks under the shade of the tower.

To reach the back of this tower they were obliged to pass a small platform on which the moon shone in all her brightness. They had just crossed it in file, as they had performed the former part of their journey, but as often as one of them rushed rapidly over the dangerous spot, he heard the tinkling of a bell, and the unconnected words of a prayer against evil spirits, proceeding from the place where the light was seen.

"Father Senoch is still on the watch," said one of the bagaudæ to his companion, in a

low voice, " and thinks that with his little " bell he shall send us all to old nick, for he " takes us for his imps. Well, well, we are in- " debted to his fears for our safety. If he didn't " make people believe we were evil spirits, " there would be no living here for us."

" What's he at up aloft there?" said another bagauda, who was less acquainted with the country.

" Why, for the last five years he has stuck " himself on the top of that tower like a sun- " dial, peeping his head out of the wall just be- " low the lamp, which the good old ladies of " Loches light every day, at the same time they " take him something to eat, for you must know " he can do nothing with his hands but just " ding-ding that bell."

Felix was convinced by this conversation, that he was now standing before the hermitage of the very saint for whom father Andrew had shewn so much veneration, but who, in piety and good sense, appeared much inferior to the friend he had lost. He saw, also, with some surprise, that the bagaudæ had brought him to the very spot he had intended to visit. This was the tower of Loches, where Andrew suspected Julia was imprisoned, the walls of which he himself, a captive as well as his mis-

tress, was now compelled to pass, without any means of confirming this conjecture or giving her any assistance.

The bagaudæ now hastened to cross the Indre and quit Loches, where was stationed a small party of soldiers in pursuit of them. Some went down into the subterraneous vaults over which the tower was erected. "Well, father "Senoch has taken good care of our boat," said they when they returned. "The devils which the "good old man always sees around him are the "safeguards of the bagaudæ; nobody ever dares "enter these caverns; so that what we left here "a fortnight ago has not been touched."

They then dragged from the tower a small boat made of wicker work, and so light that a man could easily carry it on his shoulder for several hours without feeling fatigue: they had stowed in it some hides of oxen sewed together, smeared with pitch, and sufficiently large to cover the little vessel so as to admit no water; they carried the boat, with its lining of skin, to the bank of the Indre, where, after having properly rigged it, they set it afloat. They now trusted themselves successively in small parties aboard this slight wherry, and thus all crossed the river.

CHAP. X.

THE NUNNERY.

" The queen Theodochilde was preparing to quit the con-
" vent, but the abbess foresaw her intention, and ordering
" her to be severely scourged, shut her up in a dungeon,
" where till the end of her life she was exposed to the most
" cruel sufferings."—*Greg. Tur. lib.* iv. *cap.* 26. *p.* 216.

AS soon as Julia Severa quitted Felix the massy gates of the nunnery closed behind her, and she found herself a prisoner in a dark, narrow, damp hall, where she was ordered to remain. A death-like chill now pervaded her frame: severed from all she loved on earth, delivered into the powerful hands of people whom she could regard as enemies only, no protector was left to whom she could resort: she could have communication with no living soul, who was not her persecutor; there remained no hope that any of those who felt concern in her welfare would ever discover the place of her seclusion. She sat down on the bottom steps of a staircase,

and covering her eyes with her hands, and leaning on her knees, she remained two long hours absorbed in sorrowful meditation, during which not one of the inmates of the nunnery approached her.

Nor were these feelings of grief relieved when the lady abbess, accompanied by another nun, approached her. Pride, severity, and mistrust were written on the brow of the former. Descended from an illustrious family of Gaul, and connected with Volusianus by the ties of blood, she ruled the interior of the convent with a power as despotic as the emperor wielded the sceptre of Byzantium: all resistance to her will she regarded as a heinous violation of laws both divine and human: she believed in her own sanctitude, and in the infallibility of her judgment; this tended to render her tyranny much more galling, for in exercising it over her nuns she thought she did no more than her duty.

"Daughter of Severus," said she to Julia, "the commands of the archbishop of Tours "have withdrawn you from the world, and con-"demned you to await within these walls, that "light from on high, which haply may convert "you, should not the vengeance of the jealous "God, who hath already pulled down the pride

"of the idolater, crush you also. This convent, "which until now was inhabited only by holy "virgins, we have therefore been compelled to "open unto you in spite of the repugnancy we "feel in admitting you in your present unholy "and sinful condition. Look you—if you choose "to renounce Satan and all his vanities, if, from "the bottom of your heart you will confess that "faith which now plays only on your lips, then "may you give us a convincing proof of your "conversion—binding yourself by irrevocable "vows to our holy rules: in that case, we "ourselves shall not refuse to forget and for-"give; we will receive you as an obedient "daughter."

"From no one on earth," replied Julia, rising with a proud feeling of dignity, "from no one "on earth have I to crave forgiveness or obli-"vion of my crimes; no one had the right to "exercise over me that violence which has "brought me to this spot. Dragged hither by "force, I wonder that any one should tell me I "am admitted with repugnancy."

"Severa, pride beseemeth you not in our "presence," said the abbess, "you are not now "standing amid the grovelling adulators of an "idolatrous senator: you stand before a wo-"man, who, from God and the apostolical suc-

"cessor of St. Martin, holds absolute power "over your liberty, nay, over your life."

"Were I treated in a manner less indignant," replied Julia, "I should feel less pride. What "want you from me?"

"Will you solemnly abjure your errors? Will "you bind yourself by eternal vows to follow "our order?"

"Shew me the errors of my belief—then will "I abjure them, not before. I have no means "of resisting, I must therefore bow before my "fate, but never will I sanction my captivity by "taking the vows."

"Marvel not then if you are excluded the "society of the holy virgins, whose roof hence-"forth shall shelter you—Let the idolatress "remain alone, in the company of her evil "thoughts:" said the abbess, turning towards her religious attendant. She continued—"Let "the sisters beware of approaching her. Let "an apartment be prepared for her at the ex-"tremity of the right-hand cloister. It must "not be said, that a woman, who, perhaps, still "communes with Satan, dwells near any of the "virgins consecrated to the Almighty.—Go, "sister Mary, provide for her wants, take care "her raiment be modest, and her food frugal. "Let her await in silence our orders."

The lady abbess, eyeing Julia with a look of disdain, said no more, but departed.

Sister Mary followed the abbess with her eyes for some time, wishing, as it were, to be certain that she should not be seen to infringe the command of silence she had just received: she then cast on Julia a look of compassion, blended with curiosity. "Poor girl," said she, "how "could you summon courage to speak to our "lady abbess with so much haughtiness? I "vow my whole frame quaked when I heard "you thus irritate her highness."

"I did no more than repel a wilful insult," replied Julia, "but I thought not of offending "her, still less did I think I was to fear her."

"Alas! she whose apartment you are going "to inhabit, learnt by woful experience how "dangerous it is to answer the lady abbess with "arrogance. The life of poor sister Anna paid "for her error; and yet she was not like you, "bound with the shackles of the world; she "was one of our order, she had already taken "her vows."

"Did the lady abbess then put her to death?"

"God forbid; the anointed of the Lord never "shed human blood; such an abomination hath "never been committed within our holy walls, "but the lady abbess of St. Mary of the Casket

"is like our prelate, she has the same rights "and the same privileges; her jurisdiction is "absolute over all the inmates of the convent. "Her highness, our lady abbess, only ordered "sister Anna to be shut up by the side of the "drain in the black dungeon, which we call the "*dimittis in pace;* those who are put there "never live above three weeks. But let us "go to your chamber, where you will find the "clothes of poor sister Anna, they may be of "some use to you now."

Julia Severa, with downcast eyes, followed the nun appointed to conduct her to her room. Her courageous soul, accustomed to brave all dangers, was now assailed with new terrors, and sunk beneath the repeated attacks to which she had been exposed since her visit to the castle of Rutilianus. Her road through the convent was of considerable length; she was conducted to the third story, and as the flights of stairs were not above each other, she was obliged to pass all the galleries of the lower stories. The corridor, at the bottom of which stood her room, was not like the others, surrounded by cells: the store-rooms of the convent, the piles of fire-wood, and the large open but dark spaces under the joists of the roof, shewed that this part of the edifice was not inhabited. On their way,

Julia, in her turn, put some questions to the nun.

"You were speaking about the prisoners in "the black cell; you said they never lived more "than three weeks. Pray have you known "many sent to that place?"

"No, I cannot say I have known many; for "all the time I have lived in this convent I "really think I have not seen more than five. "Now I consider it you will not be sent there, "for you are not one of our order: the *dimittis* "*in pace*, after all, is a cell, and you are not a "nun: it even is said you are not a Christian."

Julia felt no very great desire of claiming this singular privilege of Christianity and the religious order. "What had sister Anna done to "excite the resentment of the lady abbess?" said she.

"It would be a long, long tale to tell," replied Mary, "besides it is one of the secrets of our "order, and it is our duty to believe she de-"served her punishment. Be that as it may, I "would not for a great deal inhabit the apart-"ment in which she suffered so much, poor "girl. Here—we are arrived."

At the same time she untied from her girdle a bunch of keys, and opened the solitary door at the extremity of the gallery. The room was

much larger than the cells of the nuns: it was tolerably well lighted by two windows protected by strong iron gratings, but the prospect extended no further than one of the inner courts. At one extremity a few rough planks supported a straw mattress and a coverlid. By its side was an *amphora*, or jug, a deal bench stood before the windows, and an open chest completed the furniture. Near the chest were seen a few articles of female attire, that had formerly belonged to the unfortunate sister Anna. A prayer-book lay on the ground; two other books, both open, were seen lying, one on the bench, the other on the bolster of the bed, they were the Elegies of Propertius, and the Heroides of Ovid. The titles of these two books, to which sister Mary paid no attention, furnished Julia with the means of conjecturing the secret cause of sister Anna's misfortune.

"This is your chamber," said Mary, "you "will have time enough to be acquainted with "it, for you wont be suffered to leave it very "soon. The dinner hour is at noon, but it is not "likely our lady abbess will permit you to enter "the refectory. Your dinner, therefore, will be "sent to your room. I would advise you to "seize that opportunity, and ask all you may "want, for at no other time will you hear the

"sound of a human voice." The nun then quitted the room, and locked the door.

A feeling of dignity had hitherto supported Julia; but she was now no longer called upon to act; she was hidden from all observation; no longer had she her rank to support. She cast her eyes around her; the tears trickled down her cheeks. "Felix, Felix," said she, "art thou "then so near to me, and yet so distant? Canst "thou now defend me?" She approached the windows with a faint hope that she might at least see the monastery in which Felix was immured; but she soon discovered they did not command a view of the quadrangle by which she entered.

Endeavouring to dissipate the melancholy thoughts and dire forebodings which swelled her bosom, she sought to direct her imagination towards the unfortunate woman who had before occupied the same apartment; thus she fancied she might drive from her mind the contemplation of her own fate. She carefully searched the traces left by her, who, in this same spot, had undergone so many sufferings. The articles of furniture were so few that she had soon looked over them. The wainscot attracted her attention for a longer time. In more than one place she observed joints in

the pannels, which led her to suspect that the door was not the only entrance to her apartment. This caused her at first to feel something like alarm; after a little reflection it struck her that even should there be any secret inlets, they were carefully closed against her, since it was intended to render her escape impossible, while those on whom she depended were masters of the principal door, by which, at all hours, they could gain access without her permission; she also saw that in this house, guarded with so much caution, she had to fear no visits but those of the abbess and her agents.

She next attentively examined the different inscriptions which covered the wainscot. It appeared that Anna had been urged by a rebellious feeling to oppose the rules to which she had subjected herself. Far from burying in the bottom of her heart passions forbidden by those rules, she had apparently sought to confide to the walls what she could not sound in the ears of man; to supply by inscriptions the want she felt of a confidant, and thus to gratify the desire of disclosing the feelings of her heart. Most of these inscriptions were borrowed from the best poets of Greece and Rome. They consisted of brief quotations, verses probably applicable to

her own situation; but all expressed despair, hatred of slavery, disappointment, or love. After reading them, Julia fancied she might conclude her unhappy predecessor had been involuntarily immured in the cloister, in order to prevent a union which her family would not sanction; in solitude her love had become a raging passion, which, perhaps, had disordered her intellects, or, at any rate, had inspired her with aversion against the abbess, the whole house, even the religion there professed—an aversion, the monuments of which she had not feared to leave behind her.

Julia seated herself on the bed, which probably had often been watered with the tears of Anna. Her imagination endeavoured to unravel the tale of wo, the proofs of which surrounded her; thus she fancied she might forget her own grief. But when her imagination strayed to sister Anna, it was to paint her with Julia's feelings, Julia's fears, Julia's sorrows: all the deep affections which she supposed might exist in the unknown heroine of her fancy, incessantly brought her ideas back to her own situation; then again the dread she felt respecting her own fate, recalled to her mind sister Anna, and her mournful death.

For the last four and twenty hours Julia had

not undressed: she now resolved on paying some attention to her attire, hoping thereby in some measure to divert her melancholy thoughts in the midst of the inactivity to which she was condemned. The amphora was still half full of water—that water had been brought for sister Anna; she was obliged to take from the chest of the unfortunate nun the linen and garments she wished to change. Thus inheriting the property of the unknown lady, she shuddered; it seemed as if she was following her steps, doomed soon to perish in the same manner.

Time hung heavily: so many are the mournful thoughts, the fears, the regrets, which, in a short period, can succeed each other, tearing the soul with cruel asperity, when the straying of the mind is not slackened by conversation! Judging from her feelings, from her sufferings, Julia thought she must have passed at least four and twenty hours in the convent, when she heard the sound of steps in the passage. It was mid-day, and sister Mary, the same who had conducted her to the chamber, now brought her dinner.

"Well, as I said, the lady abbess does not "choose you should come to the dining hall," said Mary; "she will not allow you to speak to "any of the sisters; she permits no one to see

" you save myself; and even me she has ordered
" to be silent in your presence, and not so much
" as to answer your questions; for, says she, the
" voice of one single servant of the devil is more
" than enough to corrupt our whole convent. You
" could surely tell us some very strange tales;
" those joys of the world—from which good
" Lord deliver us—must needs be very attrac-
" tive, very seducing, since we can not even
" hear them mentioned without infringing our
" holy laws; but I am not young, and, besides,
" my hope is in God; I don't fear any thing.
" Speak, my dear, you may say all you have to
" say."

" I am at a loss," said Julia, " to know why
" your lady abbess has such a dread of my con-
" versation; but I assure you I have no desire
" to corrupt your companions, and that my
" dislike of hearing or saying things unfit for
" religious ears, is at least equal to that of the
" abbess herself."

" It is said, however, you are an idolatress,
" or at least the daughter of an idolater," said
Mary, " I suppose, therefore, you worship the
" devils. For our part, guided by the light
" from on high, we see them in their real shapes:
" they are black, haggard, and terrific; they

" have horns on their heads, a cloven hoof, and
" long tails. Heaven preserve us from their
" abominable embraces; but to you, I dare say,
" they appear in another form. I remember
" when I was still of the world, I saw some
" statues of Mars and Apollo, which might
" have delighted the eye. They are all devils,
" my dear; to those who see them in their
" true shape, they are as hideous as the one
" St. Michael overthrew; but do tell me how
" they appear to you?"

" I assure you I have never seen them under
" any form: I am no idolatress—I am a Chris-
" tian like yourself."

" A Christian like myself! At any rate, if
" you are a Christian, you are a Christian of the
" world; of that abominable world, that ocean
" of stormy vice, seducing pleasure, and crimi-
" nal luxury, from which we have happily
" escaped by taking refuge in this holy house,
" as in a secure port. Tell me what are the
" pleasures you regret the most?"

" I regret the loss of my father's society, of
" my friend's, more than all of my liberty."

" Surely you had a lover; why don't you say
" you bewail the loss of your lover? We are
" told that of all the seductions to which the

"devil resorts to ruin us, love is the most "powerful. Do tell me about your love ad-"ventures."

"Your imagination," said Julia, smiling, "advances, I assure you, much more rapidly "than realities do in the world. I have nothing "to tell you."

Sister Mary would not have given up the point so soon, had she not heard the hall bell ring: she had not a moment to lose. She called a lay sister, who was in attendance, without the door, and ordered her to perform some trivial services for Julia, while she was present. She then informed the captive that the provisions she had brought must serve her the whole day, as she would see no one until the following noon; after which she quitted the apartment with the lay sister, and again locked the door.

CHAP. XI.

NOCTURNAL VISITS.

" Under the cathedral was a very ancient and very secret " cavern, containing a large tomb of Parian marble, in which " the body of some great personage had been buried. The " bishop ordered the priest to be shut up alive in the sepul- " chre with the corse; this was accordingly executed, and " the cover of the tomb was placed over him, guards being " posted at the entrance."

Greg. Tur. lib. iv. *cap.* 12, *p.* 208.

THE prattling impertinent curiosity of sister Mary did not inspire Julia Severa with any very great desire to make her a confidant. Nevertheless, when she heard the door close upon her, she began to regret having given such ungracious and abrupt answers to her many questions; particularly when she recollected that condemned as she was to solitary confinement, Mary was the only living creature whose voice she was permitted to hear; she was the only

person by whose means she could form any hopes of corresponding with those beyond the convent walls; by whose means she might receive news concerning Gaul, the Frank king, and her father; by whose means, perhaps, she might even be enabled to send information to Felix concerning herself. This short conversation, moreover, had caused Julia to feel the sweets of human society. The ridiculous questions of sister Mary had served to divert her fears; her mind was now more calm; her situation certainly appeared fraught with sorrow and irksome monotony; but she no longer had the same feelings of terror. Her prospects had not become brighter, yet she had spoken, she had listened, nay a smile had crossed her lips: she determined, as soon as Mary should return, to give some food to her curiosity, by relating her last adventure; thus she resolved to excite, if possible, an interest in the bosom of the nun, by which she might afterwards profit, and induce her to reply to the questions she might put in her turn.

Still had she to fill up her many hours of solitude—solitude, which of all torments is the most cruel to an active mind. She had also to keep a command over the faculties of her soul and to preserve the strength of her mind; this

Julia felt to be due to her own dignity, to her father's rank, and to Felix. She felt, also, that the troubles and agitation in which she had passed the whole of the morning, had wearied her mind, and might, if continued, affect her intellects. She saw, therefore, the necessity of finding some object of occupation for each hour of the day, in order to stop the wanderings of imagination; she likewise found it indispensable to regulate the train of her ideas, that they might not lead her to a state of melancholy despondence. This task she courageously undertook. Prodigal of time, the weight of which now crushed her, she consecrated some hours to her toilet, others to her solitary meals, others, lastly, to her devotions, much more than under the paternal roof she was wont to dedicate to these occupations. Not without reluctance did she resort to the erotic poets left by sister Anna. Some of the elegies of Propertius she admired; over some of the heroides of Ovid she could shed tears of sensibility; but neither of these poets was suited to her taste. The articles left by sister Anna furnished her with another source of amusement: among them she found tablets and a style; with these she was enabled to write, and thus she resolved to pass some hours daily, recording all the remarkable phrases and

witty observations Felix's conversation had engraven on her memory. Yet she wished not to exhaust this resource, for she felt how painfully long would be her days and hours, now that no change of objects could take place around her. In one corner of the room she found a leaden pipe, a portion of which might serve her as a pencil. With this rough instrument she endeavoured to trace on two of the whitened pannels, the portrait of Felix and one of the landscapes seen from Noviliacum.

This last occupation beguiled her time, and gave to her thoughts a gentle tranquillity; it promised her a long employment, for the lead which she had rubbed on the hearth stone to form a pencil, was only fit to make the sketch; she resolved to ask sister Mary for some better instruments, and should they be refused, to use brick or charcoal. Thus busied, the afternoon glided more rapidly than the morning, and when the fall of day compelled her to give up her amusement, for both fire and light were denied her, she ate of the remnant of her dinner, and then laid her down, with that tranquillity of soul, which a pure conscience, united to a strong mind, insures to man in all situations.

The autumnal equinox was passed; the nights were long, and after twelve o'clock, in

spite of her preceding fatigues, Julia was no longer buried in deep sleep. A slight noise awoke her: she opened her eyes. The secret entrance she suspected to exist in the wainscot, was unclosed; a woman came into the room holding a lamp. Her tunic was white, a white veil covered her head: but it was raised, and permitted her wan and meagre face to be seen, which bespoke her years to be about thirty: she had probably once been handsome, but had, doubtless, suffered much. Her countenance bore the marks of sorrow and harshness, mingled with somewhat of craft. She walked slowly, and her steps were unheard. After casting one look on the bed of Julia, she attended no more to the captive; but examined the various objects which had undergone any change in the apartment; she looked at the sketches Julia had made on the wall, at the words she had traced on the tablets, at the articles which belonged to sister Anna, and those Julia had been obliged to borrow from her predecessor.

Julia remained in bed, her eyes fixed on the apparition. She was in doubt whether it was one of the inmates of the convent, or some superhuman being that stood before her. The stately motions of the white lady, her noiseless actions, the extraordinary curiosity she seemed

to have concerning all that had belonged to sister Anna, at length excited in Julia's mind the suspicion that she was either that nun or her shade. Her eyes had more than once met those of the phantom, Julia, therefore, was certain that although the white lady did not notice her, she must be conscious she was not asleep; heedless of that circumstance, she continued to examine every thing with a prying eye, expressive of curiosity only.

Julia's emotion rapidly augmented. She felt her heart throb with violence; yet concentrating all her strength, and wishing to clear up a doubt which now seemed to bewilder her faculties; anxious to ascertain whether she herself was really awake, she raised her voice and exclaimed, "Sister Anna."—Placing her forefinger on her lips, the white lady looked on Julia, and disappeared by the secret entrance, which instantly closed.

Julia, who had raised herself in the bed, now sunk back in a cold perspiration. Few women possessed more firmness of character, or an understanding more enlightened: few women were less subject to superstitious fears, or to belief in supernatural agency: but for the last few days, her life had been racked by so

many cruel storms, she had been the sport of so many extraordinary events, some of which were still unexplained; her vision at the castle of Rutilianus had in her mind so completely destroyed the limits of possibility and probability, that reason had lost its support, and she no longer knew on what foundation to rest her judgment.

Now again all was dark and silent, Julia's heart palpitated with a violence threatening to stifle her respiration; she fixed her eyes on the dark void, and wearied her nerves by looking on nothing. Her ears listened for the slightest sound, but they heard nought save the distant crackling of the wainscot, the buzz of an insect, or the faint ticking of the deathwatch. These noises caused her to start; then again she heard nothing, and endeavoured to persuade herself that what she had heard was nothing.

Endeavouring as it were to dispel the terrors which pervaded her mind, she sometimes closed her eyes, thinking she still waked, although the anxiety of her wearied mind threw her into a sort of feverish dream, during which her fears assumed new forms, but were not for one moment tranquillized. In this dreaming state of stupor, she passed more than two hours, when opening her eyes she again saw the white lady, who

was now seated on the bed, the lamp being placed on sister Anna's box.

Julia looked on her a few moments in silence; the white lady fixed her eyes on the captive, but spoke not. At length, summoning all her resolution, she ventured to say; "Who are you?"

"An unfortunate woman—like yourself a pri-
"soner; like yourself persecuted."

"What do you ask of me?"

"Compassion, counsel, perhaps protection."

"Oppressed and reduced as I now am," replied Julia, whose terrors had been dissipated by these answers, "I am far from having the
"power, either to protect or to comfort any
"other person in distress. Compassion is all I
"have to offer, that you may be assured of
"meeting with from me: but once more—who
"are you? How came you here?"

"Many long years have I been a captive in
"this convent," replied the white lady, "I
"have discovered its secret passages; when our
"enemies are buried in sleep, I sometimes profit
"by that discovery."

She now began her tale; it was long, and Julia found some difficulty in following it: too much busied with her own misfortunes and her own situation, she feared lest her mind had wandered during the narration, and prevented her

comprehending all its details. All that she could make out was that the prisoner was a victim of monastic despotism; she had long been persecuted, and the error she reproached herself with the most, and which she regarded as the cause of all her woes, was her refusal to take the veil when offered to her. In those days, she said, the folly of love filled her bosom, the breath of ambition intoxicated her brain. She had fancied that the interest of her family, that powerful friends, would rescue her from a captivity she viewed with horror: she had indignantly rejected the garb of the order, which however might have rendered her imprisonment honourable and pleasant; but she had then to learn the extent of the lady abbess's power; she was not aware of the impossibility of escaping her tyranny. Owing to this imprudence, she now was a prisoner in this house, where otherwise she might have been treated as an equal, where her birth might perhaps one day have raised her to the highest dignities. She promised, in another visit, to narrate all she had suffered, the degree of humiliation and misery to which she had been reduced, the dangers which threatened her, and the hopes which still remained. She hinted also that she might be useful to Julia; for she knew the house and the characters both of the principals and

subalterns; she had also intelligence beyond the precincts of the convent: she promised to furnish Julia with the means of communicating with her friends, as soon as she had gained her confidence, so that they might take a mutual share in each other's interests. The only demand she had to make was that the deepest mystery should veil her visits, that Julia should never divulge them, either to sister Mary or the lady abbess: she hoped the day was not distant when she might gain that friendship to which she was entitled by the similarity of their situations.

Julia listened attentively to the white lady: she promised secrecy, and accepted the offer of her visits on the following evenings. Nevertheless she was far from feeling that confidence which the stranger appeared so certain of gaining. There was not in her words and the expression of her countenance, that harmony which constitutes the unerring proof of sincerity: the tone of her voice lacked firmness, rather affecting an oily smoothness, which excited prejudices in the mind of Julia. But she was alone; though few hours had elapsed since she entered the nunnery, she had already felt the bitter torture of solitary seclusion, a seclusion which she had every reason to

believe was far from its end. The society of a human being now began to appear as one of the necessaries of life, she therefore determined not to repel even the illusions of friendship and confidence.

The white lady withdrew a short time before the break of day, and promised to return the following night. Julia, whose slumbers had been so much interrupted, feeling the want of repose after her fatigues, and having no reason to hasten her rising, remained in her bed until a late hour: she had not, therefore, time to feel the length of the morning before sister Mary arrived. She had intended to ask the assistance of that nun to enable her to complete her drawings. She made the request and it was granted: Mary gave her also the necessary implements for embroidery. Julia had also intended to take advantage of the anxious curiosity evinced by the nun to excite some interest in her bosom; she tried the experiment and it failed. When she began to give some account of her family, her rank, her former manner of living, she found sister Mary took no interest whatever in her narrative; she was entirely ignorant of the world and of all the gradations of society; she understood not the delights of refinement nor the pleasures of the mind. Julia afterwards

spoke of the strange events and the fearful adventures which had lately surrounded her; but at all this the nun expressed no astonishment. Of all that existed beyond the walls of her convent, she knew no more than the supernatural world contained in her legend: nothing could strike her as improbable or impossible; no event, however marvellous, could at all equal the wonders she each day read of in the lives of the saints; satiated with the miraculous, she had lost all appetite for what in the usual walks of life would have excited astonishment. Mary's curiosity was consequently directed towards those worldly vices from which she thought she had happily escaped—towards that voluptuous luxury, from which she thought herself sheltered only by the rules she professed: she interrupted the recital of the most alarming adventures merely to introduce a question relative to courtship and gallantry; Julia was at length so entirely disconcerted by her lewd insinuations, that she found it necessary to put an end to the conversation.

Her drawings, her needle-work, her reflections, her conjectures respecting the only two inmates she had an opportunity of seeing, enabled Julia to pass her time with comparative ease, and to divert the sorrowful thoughts ex-

cited by her situation: but that inward strength, that courage, with which she had borne up against her overwhelming misfortunes, were exhausted as soon as she was no longer cheered by the light of day. The weather was rainy and louring, the wind whistled around the lofty roof: she could now but confusedly distinguish the objects in her room; but all she saw spoke to her of sufferance and captivity; in the distance she could hear only inarticulate sounds, but they seemed to her the mournful wailings of wo. She was in the power of her own enemies and those of her father, closely confined in a vast edifice, where she well knew the most atrocious and cruel deeds had ere now been committed; she knew that victims, perhaps as innocent as herself, and certainly as powerfully protected, had perished in horrid dungeons. The white lady had but lately told her terrific tales of the living being inclosed in the same tomb with the dead, in order to constrain them to bow before the will of their spiritual superiors: she had told her of the punishments of hunger, cold, darkness, and never-ending solitude, inflicted by the order of the bishops on unfortunate wretches, who could not, any more than herself, be objects of suspicion to the clergy. She well knew that her father, hated and feared by the church, far

from having the power of defending his daughter, added to her danger: she knew that her lover was like herself, a prisoner, perhaps subjected to equally cruel treatment. The violence already committed to gain possession of her person, furnished her with a dreadful proof of the extent to which her persecutors might dare to carry their attempts; she doubted not that the life both of Felix and herself would be sacrificed, rather than Volusianus should be disappointed in reaping the fruits of his intrigues.

In the midst of these reflections the tale told by the white lady started before her recollection: she sought to unravel its details, the better to understand the whole, and to determine on what questions she should put to clear up her doubts; but the more she thought of the narrative, the more contradiction and obscurity did she discover. How came it that she had the range of the convent? How came it that she could enter the chamber of a prisoner whom they apparently wished to conceal from the eyes of all? What advice, what assistance could the stranger expect from a new captive? What advice had she given in her turn? Did she not appear, by her pretended confidence, to wish to induce her to bind herself by vows? She now recalled to her mind the last warning given by

father Andrew, when he left her at the gate of the nunnery. In a convent, as in the world, he had said, it is better to confess than to confide.

Was not the white lady one of the creatures of the abbess? Was it not probable she wished to obtain her confidence but to betray? Under the names of sympathy and friendship, did she not seek to give counsels that might lead to destruction?

The suspicion of such perfidy chilled Julia with horror. She could not, however, bring herself to reject the only consolation now left to her. So sweet to the ear is the language of sympathy, so healing a balm is even the illusion of false friendship, so cruel, so maddening, is the torture of solitary imprisonment: moreover, sister Mary, whose society she was only permitted to enjoy during one quarter of an hour each day, had disgusted her by her gross and vulgar sentiments. She resolved, therefore, to continue to shew friendly respect towards the white lady, but in her company to place a guard on her words, and to avoid putting into the stranger's possession, arms which might afterwards be turned against herself. Having duly pondered over and fixed on this resolution, she began to await the white lady with almost as much impatience as if she expected deliverance

at her hands. Want of variety is of all human sufferings the most irksome, perhaps the most insupportable; and in a life entirely uniform, unchequered either by action, motion, or exercise, there is no event, of whatsoever nature, the mind does not soon learn to pant for, and consider as a relief.

Thus passed several days, during which the misery of solitude was felt with increased severity, and the weight of inactivity became gradually more oppressive; the monotony of those long and melancholy hours was daily interrupted in a similar manner; at noon by the arrival of sister Mary; always prattling though she said nothing, accompanied by a lay sister, who only appeared for an instant, but never opened her lips; at midnight by the arrival of the white lady, who generally past two hours, seated on the edge of the bed.

The latter proceeded cautiously: she seemed aware of Julia's mistrust; but, nevertheless, she knew how to give a tone of interest to her conversation; her mind was sufficiently refined, her taste sufficiently correct, so as never to shock, like sister Mary, the feelings of delicacy. She often dwelt on her own imprudence in refusing the veil; she spoke of her admittance into the order, as the only probable term of her

sufferings: but she avoided all allusion to Julia's situation, and refrained from giving any counsel; she rendered her some slight services, in order to increase the comforts of her apartment. One night, unexpectedly, she informed the captive that she had found means of opening a correspondence beyond the bounds of the convent; she offered to convey a note, and furnished her with the means of writing. The look and the sound of voice with which this offer was accompanied, excited the suspicions of Julia: she availed herself, however, of the opportunity; but in what she wrote, observed the greatest circumspection: she penned two letters, one for her father, the other for Felix, both of whom she wished to quiet respecting her fate: but in writing to Felix, she apologised for the infringement of decorum to which she was reduced by the peculiarity of their respective situations.

To the second note the white lady brought an answer the following night. Julia immediately discovered it was not in the hand-writing of Felix, still less in his style. The writer, assuming his name, pretended that, moved by the grace of God, renouncing the world, ambition and love, he had by solemn vows dedicated himself to God in the monastery of St. Martin: he exhorted her also to do the same. Julia

read the letter, then, to the white lady, who had constantly refused to divulge her name, she coolly said, " this letter is a forgery."

The other, unmoved, replied, " I should not " be at all surprised were it so: it is very diffi- " cult, between two convents, to conceal a cor- " respondence from the governors of both. " Should either of them have seen your letter, " it will have been a sufficient motive for at- " tempting to impose upon you, particularly as " its contents must have proved that you never " had before corresponded with Felix."

" They who attempt to deceive me," replied Julia, " labour in vain. My determination never " to become a nun remains unshaken: that de- " termination is unconnected with the fate of " Felix. The abuse of power may compel me " to pine away my days in captivity; but never " will I willingly submit."

" Such noble courage I admire," said the white lady, embracing her; " I love to see " worldly advantage thus sacrificed to religious " faith: I see, my friend, I see the tenets and " opinions of Julius Severus still direct you. " Well—know a secret that long hath pressed " on my heart—know we both belong to one " and the same religion. We both profess the " faith of ancient Rome: follow me to my

" chamber—there may we fall down and wor-
" ship the gods we adore."

As the stranger spoke, Julia raised herself on the bed, eyed her with a look that seemed to pierce her very soul. The white lady cast down her eyes, and her voice faultered as she finished the sentence.

" There does exist," replied Julia, " a degree
" of treacherous meanness, which the noble
" heart can bring itself with difficulty to com-
" prehend, or to believe possible; convincing
" evidence was required for me to know your
" character; that evidence I have obtained.
" Begone! Now that you are discovered, your
" services can no longer be of use to those who
" employ you. For my part, even the horrors
" of solitude would not be sufficient to recon-
" cile me to the sight of your person."

The white lady hung down her head, and withdrew without making a reply.

CHAP. XII.

THE HERMITAGE OF ST. SENOCH.

" In that year, the blessed Senoch, a priest, was with-
" drawn from the world—by birth he was a Taifali; he took
" orders at Tours, and retired to a cell between two ancient
" walls.——

" At the corner stood a small cell, formed of square stones,
" in which a man could hardly stand erect. There he
" passed eight years and more, taking but little food, and
" spending his time in watching and praying. But after-
" wards, having received a violent fright, he began to cry
" out that he felt horrid tortures, so that aided, in my belief,
" by a part of the host of hell, he removed the square stones
" in which he was inclosed, and threw them to the earth."—
Greg. Tur. lib. v. *c.* 7. *p.* 237. *et lib.* viii. *cap.* 34. *p.* 329.

THE day following this nocturnal adventure, Julia was, at an early hour, awakened by sister Mary, who until then had never made her appearance before noon, but now entered the room ere the captive had risen from her bed.

" The lady abbess wishes to see you," said she, " make haste and dress yourself: I would
" advise you, at the same time, to pack up such
" articles as may be of use to you in the place

"to which you are to be removed; for I "think you will never come back to this room "again. I dare say poor sister Anna, in her "latter days, bewailed not taking the same "precaution, and I myself am sorry I did not "advise her so to do."

A cold thrill of horror ran through the veins of Julia; her colour fled: she sunk down, and Mary, seeing she had fainted, hastened to afford all the assistance in her power; she sprinkled water on her face, opened the windows, and at length succeeded in restoring her to life.

"Poor creature, how she trembles," said Mary, "how dismayed she appears: pluck up your "spirits; I hope the evil is not so great as you "imagine—I did not say her highness intended "sending you to the *dimittis in pace*, did I? "How could I have said so? I know nothing "about the business; I am not come to tell "lies. Nay, why should she send you there? "To be sure I have seen others taken there "who had done no more harm than you. Who "knows but these pictures you have drawn may "be the images of the false gods before whom "you bow down and worship! But that's no "concern of mine; I never told any body "about it: who can have seen them besides

"ourselves? Do pray then be a little more "calm."

Mary's words gave new food to the alarm of Julia Severa. She now guessed that, in despair of forcing her to take the veil, they would feel pleasure in establishing against her the accusation of idolatry committed on holy ground, thus to bring about a sentence which, doubtless, would be most cruel. Such, evidently, was the white lady's aim when she invited her to join in the worship of the pagan gods. Baffled in that base project, offended and humbled, it was not unlikely she had grounded the same accusations on the drawings which had beguiled the weary hours of Julia. With judges such as she had to expect, would the shield of truth suffice to defend the captive?

The Roman spirit of Julia Severa, however, rose high above the dangers which surrounded her, and enabled her to meet her fate with fortitude. Without replying to sister Mary, she arose and dressed in haste. She then packed up such garments of Sister Anna as she thought might be of service; she regarded them as her inheritance, thinking the day fast approaching when some other unfortunate female would acquire the same right over her own scanty wardrobe. She forgot not the tablets, and as she

closed them she attentively eyed the point of the style; it seemed as if she called to her memory, at the moment, that this steel instrument, used to trace letters on plates of ivory, smeared with wax, had more than once served a Roman to escape at the same time from captivity and existence. When she had made up her bundle, she took it in her hand, and turning towards sister Mary, said, "I am ready."

Julia was conducted to the parlour, where she found the abbess waiting her arrival. She was in the company of two nuns, one of whom Julia knew to be the white lady who had visited her so often in the night; the other she had not before seen.

"Julia Severa," said the abbess, "our faith-
"ful counsellors have informed us that you
"evince an unholy aversion for our sacred or-
"der: we find that you refuse the favour we
"offered you of an admittance into this house,
"the retreat of beatitude: we hear that you ob-
"stinately persist in following the evil inclina-
"tions of your corrupt heart. Our duty is to
"neglect nought that may cause the light of life
"to shine on your eyes: especially as by the
"representative on earth of the Most High,
"and also of our lord St. Martin, it is re-
"solved you shall never return to the world,

"never quit the houses of God. But, on "the other hand, we feel it our bounden "duty to guard lest one tainted sheep in- "fect our whole flock. We owe it to our "venerable sisters, to beware lest they hold "communion with the ungodly; we shall, "therefore, remove you to a spot where you "may hear the word of God, and profit by holy "example, without having the power of ren- "dering, as doubtless you would wish to render, "evil for good. In her unfathomable charity, "sister Constantia hath undertaken to conduct "you to a secure retreat, where e'en the air you "shall breathe will penetrate you with the sanc- "titude of men who have long since suffered "holy martyrdom, giving glory unto God. Go, "my sisters, under your protection may the "daughter of the idolater enter on the path to "salvation."

"Whither do you intend to take me?" said Julia.

"It is not necessary you should know," replied the abbess.

"Were I to give my consent to a deed of "such unjust violence," replied Julia, "I should "think myself unworthy the name of Roman, "unworthy to call myself the daughter of a se- "nator: but equally unworthy would it be for

"me to join in useless strife. I am in your "power: dispose of me as you list: the God "we both serve will avenge innocence op-"pressed."

Sister Mary had brought the garb in which Julia entered the convent. In obedience to a sign from the abbess, she threw it over the shoulders of Julia, covering her face with the cowl. The two nuns now drew near, and without speaking took her by the arm and advanced towards the door. A convulsive tremor ran through Julia. She offered no resistance, but experienced a feeling of joy as soon as she crossed the sill of the convent gate: when she first breathed the open air she felt as though her deliverance was at hand. A close litter, borne by two vigorous mules, was waiting in the court, guarded by four domestics belonging to the nunnery. Julia entered first: she feared lest sister Constantia, who had been named as her companion, should be the same white lady whose treachery she could no longer doubt. With pleasure she saw that the person who next ascended the litter, and was to serve as her guide, was the other nun whom she knew not. Now placed in absolute dependence on that nun, she eagerly sought to unravel her disposition by her features; but she found it impos-

sible to come to any satisfactory conclusion from the physiognomy of the holy sister—a physiognomy which appeared fashioned to express nothing but humility and devotion, and from which nature seemed entirely excluded by affectation.

The litter rapidly crossed the streets of Tours; the vehicle being often used in the service of the convent, did not attract the attention of the inhabitants. Quitting the town they crossed the Cher, and proceeded towards the south-east.

The two travellers had until now been silent; but as soon as they were in the country, sister Constantia commenced the task she had undertaken, which was to administer religious instruction, as to a new convert. She related to her, in one breath, all the principal mysteries, nearly in the same order in which the catechism explained them: she intermingled her discourse with scriptural quotations, which she offered to Julia as proofs. Julia began by assuring sister Constantia that she was already fully convinced of the truth of those principles she wished to instil: but seeing that her companion was unmoved by this declaration, she continued to listen with courtesy, and even sought, by putting various questions, to induce her instructress to

enter more deeply into subjects of which she seemed only to skim the surface. She soon perceived that sister Constantia could not quit the beaten track: she believed without reflection, without examination, all she had learnt by rote; in other respects her mind presented a mere mass of confusion and disorder. Instead, therefore, of giving her a useless toil, which, probably, might have mortified her vanity, Julia resolved to assist her in her lecture, to suggest that natural order of ideas from which she often wandered, to point out the conclusions she was incapable of deducing from the premises, to recall, successively, in their proper order, all the arguments which, doubtless, her companion wished to adopt, but had forgotten. This Julia did with so much modesty and deference, that the nun, although now much better grounded in her reasoning, much more correct in her conclusions than she usually was, did not so much as discover the assistance she received from her pupil, but rather attributed to divine grace the sudden clearness which illumined her mind.

Ultimately, however, we always gain some affection for those persons in whose company we find our powers of mind more perfectly developed. Sister Constantia, whose eyes when she ascended the litter were void of expression,

began to look upon Julia with more complacency, her self-satisfaction appeared to have given birth to more kind feelings: she proposed to teach the convert her prayers, and appeared astonished at the rapidity with which Julia learnt what she already knew.

After more than three hours passed in these various exercises of piety, Julia thought she might in her turn speak of subjects which interested her own welfare. "Can you tell me "whither you are conducting me?" said she to sister Constantia.

"I think now there can be no harm in in-
"forming you that we are going to the her-
"mitage of the illustrious confessor, father Se-
"noch. Three or four pious matrons, who for
"many years have taken care to provide the
"subsistence of that holy personage, have asked
"leave to form a small congregation connected
"with our house; I am, therefore, going thither,
"by the order of the lady abbess, to instruct
"them in our rules."

Julia having never heard of father Senoch, would have been glad to know in what place his hermitage was situate; but the knowledge of sister Constantia extended not so far; in her idea there was no other geography than that of sanctuaries, and her memory retained with diffi-

culty the name of a town or river, near the dwelling of a saint. Julia would have wished to know whether she was to remain in that small congregation, or be removed still further; but the future depended not on sister Constantia. The superintendence of their present journey, and the execution of subsequent determinations, were to be regulated by a priest who now accompanied them, travelling on horseback behind the litter. This person Julia had not yet observed; but when he drew near to give some order to the drivers, his voice thrilled her with horror; that voice she thought she already had heard, and the recollection was attached to some scene of terror. After long attempts to connect her flitting impressions, she thought she could recollect the sound, as being the voice of the monk that appeared to her in the castle of Rutilianus, and whom she now began to consider as a living being and not a spectre.

Although absorbed in the contemplation of her own destiny, Julia was not insensible to the pleasure of once more seeing the country, and enjoying the fresh breeze, after pining many weeks in captivity, and being but just recovered from her morning fears of ending her existence in the most dreadful dungeon. Her companion appeared to her a person of narrow

mind and weak intellect, but who could inspire neither fear nor disgust. The countenance of the priest, whom she had an opportunity of seeing nearer, while the mules were resting and the two travellers were partaking of a slight repast, bespoke a mixture of religious ardour and natural timidity, which did not ill accord with the part she suspected him of acting in the castle of Rutilianus. It appeared he had intended to seize her in that place, as father Andrew had done two days after at Hesodunum: in obedience to the orders of Volusianus he had attempted it; but at the moment of execution his courage failed him, and as soon as he heard the mastiffs approach he fled. Julia had now learnt to view human nature in a more hateful light; the haughty severity of the abbess, the treachery of the white lady, the vulgarity of sister Mary, inspired her with more disgust than even that action of violence. The name of the priest was Venantius; she observed him, and remarking in his voice and look a certain degree of mildness, she wished to acquit him of every thing like wilful malevolence.

The autumn was already far spent; the forests they crossed had lost their leafy clothing; but although it was now the beginning of December, the sun shone brightly during their journey,

and its setting rays gilded the tower of Loches just as it presented itself to the eyes of the travellers. As soon as they could clearly distinguish it, Venantius approached the litter, and pointing to the summit of the spire, said, "be-"hold the man of God! Behold the ever-bless-"ed father Senoch!" The nun and the priest, responding alternately, began to recite a prayer, recommending themselves to the intercession of the saint whose dwelling they now approached.

Julia fixed her eyes on the object pointed out by the priest; but with difficulty could she distinguish what it was. A very lofty square tower stood before her, rising above a small hamlet and commanding the stream of a river. The first three stories were preserved whole and entire; the second appeared even inhabited; but above these three, one side of the walls arose to the height of two stories more, the other sides having fallen from decay. The standing wall formerly constituted the back of the tower: near the top was confined within the stones, the saint held out to her admiration. His head alone was visible, placed between two hewn blocks, beneath a sort of capital: there it was so closely confined that he could neither stretch it forth nor draw it back. At a small distance below was seen an opening in the wall, from which

hung his hands, one holding a small bell. The remainder of his body was closely walled up in the stone, and the space left around his frame was so narrow that he could neither lift his hands to his face nor change his position for one moment.

A flight of stone steps, fastened to the solitary wall, led to the saint who was looked upon as a voluntary martyr. Some women, with a small basket, had ascended these steps, and were busied in feeding the saint, placing the morsels between his lips. The priest, who escorted sister Constantia and Julia, proposed, as soon as they descended from the litter, to go and receive benediction at his feet. Sister Constantia declared, with pious fervour, that of all her desires that was the most ardent, and that now she had seen the face of the man of God, she had already forgotten all the fatigues of her journey. Julia said she was prepared to follow; even the muleteers asked to be permitted to accompany them. To approach a saint, to worship him on the earth, was to insure the blessings he would one day shower down on the heads of those who had honoured him ere he was received into heaven.

The travellers therefore first ascended the staircase in the inside of the tower, and then by

the uncovered flight of steps, reached a small platform under the saint. Venantius spoke first. "Ever-blessed Senoch," said he, "by "the authority of the archbishop of Tours, I "am come to communicate the sacred rules "of St. Mary of the Casket, to the pious vir-"gins who have congregated in this tower, and, "animated by your example, have raised their "hearts to the Lord."

"*I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh,*" replied Senoch: "*and your sons and your daugh-"ters shall prophesy, and your young men shall "see visions, and your old men shall dream "dreams.*"

"Glory to God! Glory to God!" exclaimed the women; "how aptly has he answered!"

Julia in amazement turned her eyes around: the answer did not appear to her sufficiently pious to authorize such admiration. Venantius seemed aware of her thoughts. "This holy "man," said he, "hath imposed on himself a "law never to pronounce, from two hours before "sun-rise until two hours after sun-set, any "words excepting those contained in the gospel "of the day. This is the first of December, "and the church lesson is the second chapter of "the Acts of the Apostles. He has answered "me with the seventeenth verse."

Then turning towards Senoch, the priest presented Constantia. "This pious sister," said he, "hath been elected by the lady abbess of the "convent of Tours, to superintend the new es-"tablishment, and direct its inmates in the fear "of the Almighty: but her weighty task terri-"fies her; she longs for the illumination of your "counsels."

"*And they said unto Peter, and to the rest of* "*the Apostles*," replied Senoch, quoting the thirty-seventh verse, "*men and brethren, what* "*shall we do?*"

"She brings with her a young person, "daughter to an idolater and an ungodly Gaul, "whom the apostolical Volusianus would wish "to rescue from perdition, by means of your "intercession."

"*And with many other words did he testify*," replied Senoch, from the fortieth verse, "*and* "*exhort, saying, save yourselves from this unto-*"*ward generation.*"

"Even our muleteers," continued the priest, "are anxious at the end of their journey, to re-"ceive the benedictions of the glorious confes-"sor. Before taking any rest, or tending their "cattle, they are come unto you. Instead of "yielding to bodily hunger and thirst, they have "thirsted only for the word of life."

Senoch replied with the fifteenth verse: "*These* "*are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but* "*the third hour of the day.*"

"We shall, therefore, ever-blessed confessor, "tarry in your dwelling, seeking to learn holi- "ness from your example."

"*Therefore,*" replied Senoch by the twenty-sixth verse, "*did my heart rejoice, and my tongue* "*was glad: moreover, also, my flesh shall rest in* "*hope.*"

The travellers now quitted the platform, and went down to the interior of the tower, conversing on the presence of mind with which Senoch, quoting only the words of the gospel of the day, had replied to the different questions put to him.

"This holy person has been known," said Venantius, "to suffer, without complaining, the "pressure of a sharp stone, which had fallen be- "tween his back and the wall, because, in the "gospel of the day, there was no passage by "which he could make known the pain he felt, "or the assistance he stood in need of."

All appeared equally to admire his patience, and that presence of mind, which they called prophetic inspiration: Julia was the only one who doubted within herself whether, by such whimsical constraints, the saint held forth to her

admiration had not walled up his mind as well as his body, so as to render them both equally useless to mankind.

On the second story of the same tower was situate the narrow cell destined for Julia, which she was made to enter by the orders of sister Constantia. The tower was massy and spacious. The first story was occupied by the chapel and a large hall, wherein the nuns passed the day together, the second was divided into eight very confined cells. That inhabited by Julia was nearly filled by her little bed. Yet she felt a pleasure in viewing the country from her small window; she thought change of dwelling had contributed much to her comfort. She passed a few days in a sort of mental repose. She was no longer condemned to solitary confinement, but was daily called to attend, for several hours, the pious exercises of the dowagers and virgins who had united to serve Senoch, and whom Constantia instructed in the rules of her convent; she also daily assisted at the lectures and exhortations addressed by the priest Venantius to the small congregation. In those who surrounded her, she saw nothing but zeal, sincere although blind; she did not observe in them any marks of hateful passion; and although she could learn nothing in their society, although she found

nothing in them worthy to be admired or imitated, still she thought she had nothing to fear.

The inhabitants of the tower of Loches lived as it were separated from the whole world: although pilgrims came daily to visit Senoch, they had no communication with the nuns, still less with Julia. It seemed as if no tidings of what was passing in Gaul could ever reach this small convent, or excite the least curiosity among its inmates; time, however, hung not heavily. One evening father Venantius entered the room of Julia, pale, trembling, and shewing on his countenance marks of great alarm. "You "must, my daughter, prepare instantly to de- "part," said he, "we are not here in security: "the orders I have received forbid me losing "one moment in rescuing you from the search "of people who would again plunge you into "the whirlpool of destruction."

"What then alarms you?" said Julia; "to "what danger can I now be exposed?"

"To the danger of being conducted to Clovis, "first by certain bagaudæ, who are come into "the neighbourhood to seize you; secondly by "a body of Franks, already arrived at Tours, "threatening Volusianus with the effects of their "anger."

The secret inclinations of Julia, watched as

they had been by the white lady, by sister Mary, and, for the last few days, by the nuns, her companions, had been communicated to Venantius. The priest, therefore, well knew he could alarm the captive by announcing the approach of her deliverers, and thus induce her to assist in the measures to which he was obliged to resort once more to conceal her.

"We have long since known," said he, "that "the bagaudæ have been employed to gain pos-"session of your person, by the agency of an "idolatrous priestess, called Lamia, in whom "your unhappy father places implicit faith, and "who foretold your union with Clovis. The "day following your departure from Tours, all "the roads leading to that town were beset by "their wandering bands. A few days after-"wards Theodoric entered the city with his "Frank soldiers, and the sanctuary of God was "profaned by their pagan host. I thought we "should have been here in safety, but last "night a company of bagaudæ assembled at the "foot of the tower: the blessed Senoch, who "ever watches over us, removed them by pro-"nouncing the maledictions of the church; per-"haps you heard his bell; but I have just re-"ceived advice that they are still lurking in "the neighbourhood; to-night, therefore, will I

"convey you to a retreat known to myself "alone, where neither they nor any one else "shall dare to seek for you."

Julia was completely in the power of the nuns and father Venantius; she, moreover, placed a certain degree of confidence in the latter; without delay or reluctance she therefore prepared for departure, and having passed the Indre, she ascended the litter, escorted by the priest on horseback.

CHAP. XIII.

THE CASTLE.

" The soldier of Christ, Saint Lenogisilus, hearing that " the father of Saint Agneflida wished to give her in mar- " riage, heedless of threats, took the holy virgin to his own " cell, and there placed the veil on her, consecrating her " to God. She wore it to the end of her days, valiantly " serving the Lord, together with that man of God."—*Vita Sancti Lenogisili Confessoris, cap.* iii. *p.* 497. *vol.* iii.

THE priest Venantius, not aware that the bagaudæ had found the means of passing the river at Loches, thought he could not better provide for the security of his captive, than by placing both the Indre and the Cher between her and them: he took the proper measures to have a boat in readiness on the latter of those two streams. Before midnight he embarked with the daughter of Severus; and following the current of the Cher for nearly a quarter of an hour, they landed on the right bank, at the

door of a small chapel, situate near the foot of a lofty promontory, on the top of which Julia thought she could distinguish an ancient building. Father Venantius had the key of the chapel: it was empty, in a neglected state, and apparently had not for a long time been employed for divine service. Having lighted one of the wax tapers that stood on the altar, Venantius took the light in one hand, and with the other led Julia forwards: they passed by a small door behind the altar, of which the priest had also the key, and entered a subterraneous passage with many turnings. After walking some time in the cave, they found a long flight of steps, which they ascended with considerable fatigue. There were some openings intended to admit light; but although Julia drew near to them, in order to discover whither they were taking her, she could distinguish nothing. The moon had not yet risen, all was in darkness. Instead of ascending the last flight, which seemed to lead to the principal entrance, Venantius, followed by Julia, took a turning to the left, that brought them to a back staircase, at the top of which he opened, with the same keys, a room, into which he desired Julia to enter.

This room was small, but neat; it appeared once to have been elegantly furnished, but had

not for a long time been inhabited. "There "you may repose," said Venantius to Julia, shewing her a sort of couch. "Avail yourself "of the light of my taper to view the place in "which you are to rest, to find what you may "stand in need of, and to be convinced that "you run no danger, for in a few minutes I "shall be obliged to leave you in the dark: the "taper must not be seen too long shining in "the same place. Be not uneasy, but sleep; "to-morrow I will obtain a better lodging for "you." Having thus spoken, he placed the taper near the various articles contained in the room, as if anxious that Julia should not be alarmed when left in the dark; he then quitted the apartment, and locked the door.

In spite of the care Venantius had taken to tranquillize the imagination of Julia, she no sooner found herself alone, without light, in a strange place, to which she had been introduced in so extraordinary a manner, than she felt her heart beat with violence. No sound was heard either above or below, in the vast building where she was a prisoner: she was, perhaps, the only living soul under the roof; for she thought Venantius must have again descended to the chapel, in order to make the proper arrangements with the ferrymen and

muleteers for her journey on the next morning. Not a beam of light penetrated her room, until the moon, now on its decline, arose: then she observed some crevices in the shutter which closed her window: she endeavoured to open it; but the bolts which fastened it were either rusty, or so contrived that she was unable to succeed; she looked through the openings of the shutter, which gave her only an indistinct view of exterior objects; yet she was struck at the resemblance the meadow she now saw before her, and the border of the surrounding wood, bore to those of the castle of Rutilianus. She knew not the name of the last river she had crossed, but when she reflected, it appeared probable it was the Cher; and however extraordinary it might seem that she should be brought back by her persecutors to the very castle where they had first attempted to seize her, yet as she persisted in believing that Venantius had made the attempt, although he would not acknowledge it, she had every reason to believe he knew the secret passages, and had the keys of the castle of Rutilianus. In order to confirm her conjecture, she once more peeped through the crevice, seeking some object she might recognize with certainty.

In the edge of the wood which girded the

castle of Rutilianus, was a spot she could not have forgotten: it was that pointed out by Radbode as the place where the former master of the castle had been murdered with all his children; and where, each year, the spectres appeared to repeat the same bloody tragedy: she sought for the spot and soon discovered it. The singularly twisted branches of the trees, the white trunks, which in her memory were attached to the horrid picture drawn by Radbode, again presented themselves to her view. On the day of the ides of December had Radbode said, just two hours after midnight, the ghosts never failed each year to appear. She consulted her memory: this very night was that of the ides of December, and judging, by the rise of the moon, it could not be far from two hours after midnight. In the same castle, surrounded by numerous domestics and veteran soldiers, under the protection of the mistress of the house, her friend, she had experienced a deadly terror at the mere recital of the spectre tale: she was now once more in the same place, at night, at the very hour when the phantoms might be expected to appear: but alone, a captive, her existence even unknown to the inmates of the castle. Far, however, from turning her eyes from the spot, where every moment she expected to see

the spirits arise, she fixed them with anxious curiosity on the corner of the wood; her breath was suspended, her knees tottered, when suddenly her attention was attracted by a noise close to her person. The footsteps of several people were heard, walking in an apartment, seemingly separated from her own by a mere partition of wood; she listened attentively: a female spoke: although her voice was rough and masculine, it was not that of Radbode.

"You are in the right," said the female, "you are in your own mansion; but recollect "you are still in my power. Your life shall still "answer for that of Procer; and if you make "the slightest attempt to regain your liberty "before he is restored, by the heavens I swear "my threat shall be executed: your corse shall "be left here severed into four quarters——but "I have better hopes both for yourself and for "me; one of my people informs me that your "soldier quitted Bourges yesterday morning "with my husband; and if your friends act "fairly he will soon be here."

"I confidently expect his arrival," replied a voice, the sound of which thrilled the heart of Julia—it was that of Felix. In her astonishment it was with difficulty she could resist the desire of calling to him and of pronouncing his

name; but the words she had just heard made known to her that he was a prisoner, exposed to a danger, the extent of which she could not scan; but which one single word might, perhaps, render fatal: she refrained; she resolved to await, and again to listen; but the blood, which a few moments before had fled from her cheeks now rushed back; and a vivifying warmth succeeded to the death-like chill which just before had spread over her frame. The danger was not removed, the future was still concealed from her; but she had resumed all the hopes of youth—the voice of Felix was to her the height of felicity.

"And what do you intend doing with the "priest you have just seized?" said Felix.

"Were I to do as I ought, I should soon "hinder him from divulging our secret; but "Armentaria is not cruel; she never sheds "blood without necessity. Let Procer once be "restored, and I will accept the ransom offered "by this man and take him back to Loches. "There is no great fear he will betray us, for "when he met us down yonder, he was in such "a terrible fright, that I am sure he will never "again, in all his days, think of ascending the "steps of the Cher."

"This is the fourth day," replied Felix, "that

"you have compelled me to lead the life of a "bagauda; but now I am again under a roof "and have a bed at my command, I wish to be "left alone, that I may enjoy a little repose."

"To that I have no objection," replied Armentaria; "for we can expect no news before "the morning." These words were followed by the noise of a closing door, driven bolts, and retiring footsteps. Felix, a prisoner, was now alone: he was by the side of Julia, separated from her by a slight partition. Julia's heart throbbed with violence: she listened again, the better to ascertain whether he was alone, then, with a timid voice she exclaimed—"Felix!"

Where find terms to describe the effects of that well-known voice—that voice which Felix could not mistake, which struck his ears amid the darkness of night, when in captivity, far from all places where he might hope to meet his Julia: when, foiled in his unfortunate combat with the bagaudæ, he was tortured by the thought that she was still sighing in the bottom of some dungeon, in the cavern of some convent! A thousand confused and contradictory thoughts rushed before his mind. She herself it was—restored to liberty; she herself it was, perhaps, calling for his assistance from the bottom of her cell—no, it was not she, it was her

shade come to announce her death and cry for vengeance! The exclamation "Julia, my dear "Julia!" he repeated now in the voice of frantic joy, then with the accent of agonizing terror; but so great was their eagerness, so great was their agitation, that several moments elapsed ere the two lovers could mutually hear and decide in what place they were, what obstacles separated them, what dangers still overhung them.

The conversation which now took place through the partition was not interrupted. Father Venantius, surprised by the bagaudæ as he quitted the chapel, was bound and cautiously guarded in the vaults. Armentaria having placed scouts in the neighbouring forests, and on the banks of the Cher, fixed her quarters in the hall on the ground floor, where she lay on a mantle, surrounded by the women and children of her band. Several hours were wanting to daybreak, but to Felix and Julia they appeared not long. In a situation yet more perilous, in greater doubts respecting futurity, they had side-by-side descended the Loire two months before, yet had they, during their solitude, often retraced, with gentle emotions, the recollection of that dreadful night. At the present moment they were more completely separated; but, on the other hand, they were unobserved. The infor-

mation they received from each other, the narrative they respectively told each other, gave them reason to believe their dangers were ended. Julia learnt from Felix that Clovis was on the point of espousing Clotilda; that Severus, despairing of bringing about his projected alliance with the barbarian king, had given his consent to his daughter's marriage; and that it was to effect her deliverance he had induced the Franks to march to Tours; that the barbarians had not entered that city in the design with which the priest had alarmed her; she learnt that when Felix departed in search of her, he had obtained the certainty of receiving her hand from her father, should he succeed; that the misfortune of falling into the power of the bagaudæ had to him been an object of sorrow, inasmuch only as thereby he had been prevented continuing his research; and that, as they had been the cause of his finding his long-lost friend, he should congratulate himself on having been captured by them. But when he pronounced these last words, the recollection of father Andrew, who had fallen in the contest, started before his mind; with tears of sorrow the two captives bewailed the death of the virtuous priest in whose imprudent zeal and blind obedience had originated all their woes.

"This captivity," said Felix, "cannot last "much longer; it would not be worth while "to attempt to regain liberty by our own "strength; since, if I may judge by the infor- "mation given to Armentaria, her husband is "liberated from the gaol of Bourges, and our "exchange will take place in the morning."

He was not mistaken: hardly had the first beams of the rising sun gilded the tops of the neighbouring hills, when a shout of joy rung through the wide passages and halls of the castle of Rutilianus. Radbode, who during this terrific night, had more than once heard strange noises in the upper part of the mansion, and whom the evil spirits had never before threatened so loudly, now, cheered by the dawn of day, and armed with her battleaxe, rushed from her lodge near the principal gate, and hurried to the meadow before the castle. There she met Diocles and Procer Nunnianus approaching together; in the mean time the bagaudæ who had been scattered for observation in the wood, flocked around their chieftain, pressing his hand and greeting him with cries of joy; the windows of the castle flew open; Armentaria and her companions hailed her husband's return with loud acclaim, mingled with sobbings of

delight; she then hastened down, and rushed to his arms.

Radbode, in amazement, looked around, turning now towards the wood, now towards the castle, then towards Diocles, astounded at the sight of such a crowd, where she thought all was solitary. "You shall soon see some more guests," said Diocles smiling, "I hear from these good "people, that our master Felix Florentius passed "the night in this castle without your know-"ing any thing of the matter; the lady Sylvia "Numantia and Julius Severus are about a "quarter of a mile in the rear: they wont come "up until we have settled the exchange of this "captain with Felix: they were afraid to shew "themselves before, lest your guests, seeing "them approach, might retreat with as little "noise as they advanced."

The slaves Felix had despatched from the camp of the bagaudæ to Tours, just after his capture, had induced not only Sylvia Numantia but Julius Severus also, to come and meet Felix at the castle of Rutilianus. Felix was now the only person on whom Severus could rely for the recovery of his daughter. No negotiation, no promise, no threat, had been able to make Volusianus throw any light on Julia's fate. No

information had been received either among the inhabitants of Tours, or from the secret agents, who, directed by Lamia, scoured the neighbouring country. Dumnorix, the foster-brother of Julia, disheartened by so many unavailing efforts, pined in sorrow, each day commencing vain attempts, uncheered even by hope.

The forces Severus had called to his assistance now began to desert him. The Franks Theodoric had led to Tours found the hospitality of the monks preferable to that of Severus; the wines of the Loire increased their veneration for St. Martin; they spent their time between the dining-hall of the convent and the cathedral, where they daily came to gaze on the ceremonial pageantry of the church; they devoutly listened to exhortations pronounced in a language of which they understood not a word. Theodoric at length told Severus that he thought it prudent to depart for Soissons with his companions in arms, for he could not answer, should Volusianus request the Franks to arrest Severus himself, whether they would not eagerly perform that service for him whom they called the head prelate of the Latins.

With a heart bruised by grief, his ambitious hopes completely blasted, torn by anxiety respecting the fate of his daughter, Julius Severus

therefore accompanied Sylvia to the castle of Rutilianus, in order the sooner to have an interview with Felix, and hear, from his own lips, the information he might have received from the priest Andrew, of whose death he had already heard. He followed on horseback the litter in which Sylvia travelled with Eudoxus, and a bagauda having been despatched to inform them they might advance, they reached the meadow just as the sun's disk began to appear above the horizon. At the same moment, Felix and Julia, (arm-in-arm,) came out by the castle gate; Diocles and Procer, Radbode and Armentaria stood around them; the plain was covered with bagaudæ; the federates also crossed the ravine, and flocked from the neighbouring field.

We shall not attempt to describe the joy of Severus, finding, in so unexpected a manner, his beloved daughter; that of Sylvia, pressing her son to her bosom; that of the two lovers, who now first tasted of unmingled bliss; of Procer and Armentaria, that couple, one of whom had so recently escaped the scaffold; that of Diocles, of Radbode, of all the domestics. A common feeling of gladness seemed to animate the various groups, which now stood separate, then again united. In order that no one under the roof of the castle of Rutilianus might be a stran-

ger to their joy, Julia requested of Armentaria the favour of restoring to liberty the priest Venantius, whom she held captive. This favour was nobly requited by the offer Felix made to Procer, to Armentaria, and their little band. He promised he would receive them on his vast estates, that he would give them houses and land, and enable them, under the condition of their paying a small service, to resume those agricultural labours for which they were born, and from which oppressive violence alone had driven them.

The nuptials of Felix and Julia took place two days after at Noviliacum. There they passed their lives in retirement, far removed from the political convulsions which shook their unhappy country. Sylvia never quitted them. The affection of her son and daughter rendered her latter days more serene and happy than had been the spring of life. Fifteen years afterwards Felix became a subject of the king of the Franks, but without experiencing the calamities of warfare. Clovis and his army passed the Loire at Tours in the year five hundred and seven; he fought and conquered the Visigoths in the plains of Vouglé; but Noviliacum, situate to the left of his march, remained untouched, unravaged by his soldiers.

Julius Severus, as soon as Clovis was united to Clotilda, a ceremony which took place a few weeks after the marriage of his own daughter, returned to the Frank court. The king received him with respect, regarding him as the head of a party still powerful among the Romans, that of the pagans, which the conqueror did not wish to alienate: he confirmed him in the government of the earldom of Chartres. After Clovis's death, Severus attached himself to his eldest son, Thierry, who, not being born of Clotilda, or from a marriage acknowledged by the priests, had not the same respect for the church as his brothers.

Volusianus remained four years longer in the possession of the archbishoprick of Tours. The conversion of Clovis, so ardently desired by the prelate, and to which he had so much contributed, was the cause of his downfal. His intrigues with the king of the Franks, in order to bring him to the south of the Loire, after the battle of Tolbiac, in four hundred and ninety-six, excited at length the alarm of the king of the Visigoths. Alaric the Second ordered him to be seized at Tours and brought to Toulouse, his capital, where he was kept under close watch. New proofs of his treachery being discovered, the Visigoths carried him to a spot called Pe-

trosa, in the earldom of Foix, where, on the fifteenth of the calends of February, he was beheaded, as guilty of high treason. His ashes were collected by the orthodox, and deposited in the Basilica of St. Nasaire, at Foix, which afterwards bore the name of the Basilica of St. Volusian. During the religious wars they were scattered by the Calvinists; but the feast of the intriguing martyr has always been celebrated at Foix, on the eighteenth of January, and probably is kept to this day.

The priest Martin never made his appearance at Noviliacum: he had been rewarded with a rich stall, which enabled him to forget some qualms of conscience, he could not help feeling at first, respecting the secrets of his patron, which he had divulged to his ecclesiastical superior. Dumnorix, the foster-brother of Julia, remained together with Sangiban, in her service, tending the flocks in the wilds of Sologne.

Eudoxus passed a happy old age, and died at Noviliacum by the side of Sylvia and Felix, whose adventures, he said, imposed on him the duty of writing an important work on the etymology of the term *bagauda:* but he never completed his undertaking, at least his manuscript has not been handed down to us; so that we are in doubt whether he derived the word from the

Latin *bacchari* (to revel, to riot), or from the Celtic *bagad*, (a tumult.)

We have unsuccessfully sought for information respecting the fate of Diocles, of Radbode, and father Venantius; should we happen hereafter to receive any, we shall consider it our duty to communicate it to our readers.

THE END.

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